Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

THE WAR OPENS OUT

MAY 1940 SIXPENCE

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TO READERS & AGENTS

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

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TO OUR READERS

The spreading of the war to Scandinavia has created increased difficulties for us, as for all journals. The cutting off of supplies of paper has brought very much more stringent restrictions in its use. Up to now we have been able to maintain our pre-war size and form, but now the LABOUR MONTHLY *will have to appear with fewer pages. In spite of this we intend to go on providing our readers with the essential analysis of the situation for which they have always turned to us. The fact that our circulation has increased nearly two and a half times since September last shows that it is more than ever needed at the present time, and we shall so arrange our contents that it is still given.*

At the same time it is necessary that no single copy should be wasted. We are therefore compelled to refuse in the future to accept returns of unsold copies from newsagents. This measure has already been adopted by nearly every other publication. In order to enable agents to order the correct number of copies and so to ensure that every reader gets his copy, he should place a definite order with a newsagent at once. Better still, he should take out a subscription at our office and thus make sure that his copy reaches him direct from the printers and immediately the current number appears.

Also our costs are still rising. On p. 293 we acknowledge with thanks a number of donations to our development fund. In normal circumstances the increase in receipts from sales would have put us in the position of completely meeting our expenses. But rising costs still leave a margin to be covered. For this we still have to appeal to our readers to help us. There may very well be other ways in which some readers think that they could help the LABOUR MONTHLY. *We shall be very glad to hear of these and to get the help of our readers in making the magazine more efficient and widespread.*

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

May Day in War-time—War Frenzy and Bournemouth—"No More Kid Gloves"—After the Finnish Adventure—The Northern Theatre of War—Whose Guilt?—Neutrality in the Furnace—Bournemouth Labour Party Conference—The Price of Southport—The Responsibility of Bournemouth—Remember 1914*—The Political Truce—Vain Denials—"Left War-Socialists"—Coalition Moves—Leaders of Counter-Revolution—The Acid Test—The Socialist Fight at Bournemouth*

May Day, the day of international working-class solidarity, the day on which the workers of all lands proclaim their unity, their defiance of capitalism, and their determination to struggle as a single international army for the victory of world socialism, sounds its historic call to the workers this year in the midst of imperialist war. On all sides the imperialist war-makers drive forward their policies of slaughter and barbarism : they extend the horrors of war to new countries and peoples : those States which are still outside prepare to enter the conflict : their rage and fury against the working class, against the colonial peoples and above all against the Socialist State of the victorious working class, the Soviet Union, know no bounds. The traitors to the cause of Socialism, the puppets and pawns of their imperialist masters, hound on the slaughter, bay with impotent fury against the Soviet Union and seek to lash forward a campaign of unexampled slander against communism and the militant workers. Never since the years 1914-18 *has May Day taken on such significance. This first May Day in war time is the first testing and review of the strength of the working-class forces in the struggle against war and reaction. For all these years the enemies in the Labour movement have sought in vain to stifle and kill May Day and to turn it into a harmless festival of passive acquiescence in capitalist slavery. This May Day sounds its call anew in all its revolutionary meaning : "Workers of all countries, Unite ! You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to win !"*

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WITHIN twelve days of May Day the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference meets. The Bournemouth Conference of the Labour Party meets in the midst of a very grave extension of the war—the extension for which the Labour Party leaders clamoured. This extension may have gone considerably further, reaching to new regions even more decisively important than Northern Europe, by the time the Bournemouth Conference meets. The development of the war in Northern Europe—prepared and planned by both sides for months past, but in the end deliberately provoked by Anglo-French action—opens up possibilities and consequences to which no limit can be set. The turning point of a month ago is past. The " Peace Scare " of mid-March, which followed the Soviet-Finnish Peace and spread panic for a few days through the Stock Exchanges of the world, has given place to the frenzy of unlimited war. The riot of capitalist disorder is spreading fast over the world ; it will overturn many things before it has run its course. Last month we wrote :

> The dominant war party presses for more violent and more reckless measures. Extend the war, open up new theatres of war, no more moral or juridical scruples, no more gentlemanliness—these are the war cries of the British and French press, of the spokesmen of Western imperialism and their Labour echoes. The world trembles on the edge of the abyss, on the edge of an extending conflagration of unlimited all-destructive world war.

These gentlemen have had their way. They have unloosed the whirlwind. Let us hope they will enjoy the harvest, not only in massacre and destruction and misery for millions, but also in the final shattering of the social institutions on whose foundations their power and privileges are based. *The delegates to Bournemouth have to face the responsibilities of socialists in this crisis. They have to choose between being the blind tools and accomplices of berserk imperialism or fighters for international socialism.* No lying slogans, no sophistries, no pleas of discipline can evade the plain issue which faces every socialist to-day in this fateful hour for the future of humanity.

THE new orgy of war of the world bandits of imperialism, raging and trampling over the peoples of Northern

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Europe, and spreading death in their adjoining waters, is the direct sequel of the criminal war provoked in Finland, the remorseless working out of the logic of imperialist war, the translation into flesh and blood of those bland easy phrases about the " intensification of the war " and the " removal of the kid gloves " in which the liberal-labour idealist supporters of the war have loved to indulge. It is the direct continuance of the aggressive plans for spreading the war which have been consistently proclaimed for months past by all the official and semi-official spokesmen of Western imperialism as the indispensable strategic solution to break the deadlock of the war and the only alternative to the proposals for peace which they have successively rejected and concealed from their peoples. Now that these plans have matured, their authors seek to take on the innocent and aggrieved air of surprised spectators suddenly called on to rally once again to the cause of the independence of small nations, whom a moment before they were openly bullying in order to provoke the war situation which has followed. But their own previous declarations of the imperative necessity to develop at all costs the Northern theatre of war remain in black and white in the historical record, alongside the successive actions which were carried out in order to ensure the realisation of that aim.

THE eyes of many who were blinded to the real issues of the war in Finland, to the real rôle of those outside forces which prevented a peaceful settlement in October, provoked a costly war and sought in vain to prevent peace in March, should now be opened. " The war in Finland," wrote " Scrutator " in the *Sunday Times* on March 17, " gave us the first chance of one military initiative which the peace has taken from us." " Peace " in Northern Europe was the disaster from the point of view of Western imperialism ; the " military initiative " (not the fate of small nations) was the governing consideration. What have those vacillators now to say who would have had the Soviet Union wait for final " proof " in action of the intentions to promote a theatre of war in Northern Europe, who would have had the Soviet Union remain passive until the planned offensive with all

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the forces of Western imperialism could be launched in the Spring, or who would have been content to produce a situation in which the present conflagration of war could be raging in Northern Europe at the very doors of the Soviet Union, with Hangö and all the vital strategic points in the hands of imperialism? The Soviet Union acted only just in time. The first plans to promote the Northern theatre of war on the basis of Finland were foiled. But the second plans have gone forward. Peace in Finland could not prevent the continuance of these plans in the other regions of Northern Europe, especially as the Norwegian and Swedish Governments failed to follow the wise course of promoting Scandinavian and Baltic peace in unity with the Soviet Union and instead entered into the dangerous adventure of collaborating with Western imperialism in promoting the war in Finland.

ANY understanding of the present war situation in Northern Europe can only follow on the correct understanding of the war in Finland. The retrospective confirmation now afforded by present events of the vital importance and necessity of the struggle which had to be waged in Finland requires to-day to be demonstrated and hammered home to all those elements who were led astray by the barrage of imperialist propaganda at the time. The anti-Soviet aims of Western imperialism, and the aims of developing a new front of war in Northern Europe, were closely intermingled in the promotion of the war in Finland. Both aims received a heavy check from the March peace. But both aims still continue. The anti-Soviet aim, following on the decisive victory of the Soviet Union, had to pass into a stage of caution. Hence the declaration of Churchill on March 30 that "it is no part of our policy to seek a war with Russia," succeeded by the more revealing declaration of Halifax about the "division of opinion" on this vital question:

> There are those who would have us declare war on the Soviet Union and, on the other hand, there are those who would seek a *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union. As on most questions in this world, opinion is divided (Lord Halifax, speech on April 10).

With this may be compared the open incitement of General

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Ironside's interview, the direct calls in the French right wing press to proclaim the Soviet Union an enemy, and the speculations in the *Daily Telegraph* of April 11 on the possibility of resuming the war on the basis of Finland. The anti-Soviet aim remains powerfully operative, and at each new turn in the situation may come once again into the forefront, including in connection with the present military and naval operations in the North. But while these plans received a check through the Soviet-Finnish Peace, the parallel aim, to develop the Northern theatre of war, was only intensified, and the campaign to realise it through other means immediately followed on that Peace. Hence the concentration on Norway.

ONLY those who willingly confine their vision within the blinkers provided by official propaganda would endeavour to restrict their judgment of the responsibility for the present extension of the war in Northern Europe to the events of the final days preceding that extension, or enter into laborious calculations of the relatively short interval of time between the final act of the British-French violation of Norwegian neutrality through the laying of mines in territorial waters and the subsequent Nazi counter-measures of the military occupation of Denmark and Norway. In fact the decision to lay the mines was taken at the Allied War Council on March 28 :

> It was emphasised in authoritative quarters yesterday that the decision to lay mines at three points in Norwegian territorial waters was not the consequence of any sudden improvisation on the part of the Allied Governments and that it did not represent an isolated political stroke. It can safely be assumed that the decision was taken in principle by the Allied Supreme War Council at their meeting on March 28 (Diplomatic Correspondent, *Times*, April 9).

Since any such decision would immediately become known to the Intelligence Service of the other side, this leaves a period of twelve days for the final Nazi decisions of the undoubtedly previously prepared counter-measures to be brought into operation. But in fact the minelaying was only the last act of a series which had begun already with the "Altmark" incident in February, and which had been preceded by an open campaign to draw in the neutrals. It was in January

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that Churchill's summons to the neutrals spread the alarm among all the neutral States, when he proclaimed that " the storm will not pass ; it will rage and roar ever more loudly ; it will spread to the South ; it will spread to the North." And it was in March that the *Temps* proclaimed that " henceforth the Entente must attack everywhere that attack is possible . . . . seek and find those battlefields which will permit them to deploy their immense military forces . . . . dispel diplomatic fictions," etc. The campaign to end the neutrality of the neutral States and extend the war was the campaign of the Anglo-French imperialists, in accordance with their strategic interests ; and the successively enlarging actions of violation of neutrality were intended to provoke Nazi counter-measures which would lead to an open war situation.

NEUTRALITY of the smaller States in the zones of war is shrivelling up in the blaze of the present war far more rapidly than in the last war. In the last war diplomatic negotiations brought in Italy and Turkey in the course of the first year, Bulgaria in the second, and Rumania in the third ; it was not until June, 1917, that the first violent measures were taken to force in a neutral by the Anglo-French deposition of King Constantine in Greece and instalment of a puppet Government under protection of their troops (the original violation of neutrality by the landing at Salonika having taken place in 1915). The Scandinavian countries and Holland were able to keep out, and in the case of Sweden and Holland to make high profits from the war, throughout the war. The different fate of these countries in the present war is a measure of the greater intensity of the present war. *The illusion of escape from the storm and stress of the present era of violent break-up of the dying social order is being remorselessly shattered for every country, large or small, no less than for individuals. The dreams of the middle way and of the happy exception are receiving their death-blow under the hammer of history. There are no exceptions and there is no escaping the inevitable struggle. The only solution is the collective solution through the common struggle of the masses of the people in all countries, great and small, against the old capitalist order and for the victory of world*

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socialism. But in this necessarily harsh transition the Power which represents the future world socialist order, the Soviet Union, is already able to exercise its influence as the strongest force for the assistance of the struggle of the peoples for peace, and also, to the extent of possibility, for the protection of the peoples, as in the happier case of the Baltic peoples.

IT is in this sombre world situation, in which the shadows of war are deepening over the world, in which British imperialism stands out as the main driving force of aggressive extension of the war and of world reaction, but in which at the same time the greatest issues and responsibilities and also hopes are rising for socialists for the deepening struggle against the old capitalist order and for the victory of world socialism, that the Bournemouth Conference of the Labour Party meets. Less than a year has passed since the Southport Conference. What a gulf lies between! At that Conference the leaders of the Labour Party proclaimed that they would fight for nothing but socialism ; that nothing but immediate socialism could serve the needs of the situation ; that no arguments of the urgency of the international situation should be allowed to divert them from that goal ; and that at no cost could they collaborate with any capitalist representatives even to defeat the main representatives of capitalism. They refused to lead the forces of the people in order to defeat the Chamberlain Government. By that refusal they brought on the war.

"SOLDIERS, to your posts! Forward to victory!" With these words Greenwood closed that Southport Conference in June, 1939. He did not say what "posts" or whose "victory." He did not say what "fight" when he declared that "the fight is on." His auditors might have believed that he meant the fight for socialism. A bare three months' interval was to undeceive them with a completeness never equalled. The next Manifesto of the Labour Party executive decoded the cipher. The next Manifesto, issued in February, 1940, concluded with the words : "Victory must come to the arms of Britain, France and their Allies." No metaphorical ambiguities here. Victory for Chamberlain, victory for the Two

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Hundred Families, victory for the City of London, victory for the Comité des Forges, victory for the two most powerful slave-owning Empires in the world—and the workers to be once again the cannon-fodder for such a victory as in 1914. Such was the outcome twenty two years after the adoption of " Labour and the New Social Order."

THE war brought the real test of the fight for the aims of socialism against war-making capitalism. At once without hesitation, without any of the preliminary confusion which had accompanied 1914 (when the Executive first adopted a resolution condemning the war and then rallied to its support), the more highly trained representatives of Chamberlain-Socialism adapted their position. Having refused to collaborate with democratic representatives for the defeat of the most reactionary capitalist forces and the victory of peace, they had no scruples in collaborating with the most reactionary capitalist representatives for the purposes of war. They have elaborated the theory of " war socialism " (familiar also from the last war)—or the glorification of the most extreme dictatorship of monopoly capital for the limitless exploitation of the people. They have closed down on the independence of the working-class movement and forbidden even electoral contests against the representatives of Chamberlain. They have passed without protest the destruction of democracy in France, and approved the most ruthless measures of repression against the demand for democracy in India. They have entered into a raging tearing campaign of support for armed warfare against the Socialist State. This is the evolution which has taken place. The test of the fight for socialism, for international socialism, is here. They are on the other side. This is the situation on which the delegates to Bournemouth have to pass judgment ; and their verdict will determine the future fate of the Labour Party as a political party endeavouring to claim the allegiance of socialists.

LET the delegates to Bournemouth remember 1914. If they wish to prepare themselves for their task, let them read and read again the records of the Conferences of those years of shame, which ended with the universal cry, echoed

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even by the leadership: "Never Again." There is not a phrase, there is not an argument used to-day which was not used in corresponding form then. All know where that path led. Do they want to tread it again? But this is a different war, we are told. This is a different world situation. Fascism did not exist then. Yes; this is a different world situation. It is a different world situation, because socialism already exists, no longer as a dream, but as a reality; because the world socialist revolution has developed for twenty two and a half years, and holds power in the largest State in the world. Fascism is only one expression of this basic world conflict of capitalism and socialism. If the fight against fascism is falsely isolated from this world conflict, and is made the cover for the fight of one imperialist State against another imperialist State, then it turns into its opposite and becomes in fact assistance for the extension of fascism and reaction in all countries end for war on Socialism. And precisely for this reason the betrayal of 1939 is far more serious than the betrayal of 1914, because it means, not only support of an imperialism grown even more decadent and reactionary than a quarter of a century ago, but open taking sides in armed warfare against world socialism, whose representative is the Soviet Union. The death sentence brought in by "Socialist" Ministers against communist and revolutionary working-class propaganda in France; and the armed expeditions in support of a Mannerheim against the Soviet Union: these are two parts of a single policy, of the policy of world reaction, of the maintenance of capitalism against socialism.

ON the agenda of the Bournemouth Conference the question of the Political Truce is revealed as the central issue agitating the minds of the delegates. Fifty resolutions of opposition, or one-quarter of all the resolutions sent in, reveal the deep dissatisfaction throughout the working-class movement which all the measures of discipline and of filleting of the constituency parties have not been able to quell. There are more resolutions on the political truce than on the question of the war. This is not an accident. The policy of support of the war first and most sharply strikes the consciousness of

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the rank and file of the working-class movement in its inevitable consequence, the political truce, the *union sacrée*, unity with capitalism, unity with the class enemy, the denial of all for which the working-class movement stands. The instinctive revolt against this is the first stage of awakening, the first expression of the fight against the war. Here in consequence is the immediate foreground of the battle. The heart of the policy of support of the war is expressed in the political truce. The instinct of the rank and file is fundamentally sound in seeking to strike its first blow here. It is no mere electoral question, but the whole policy of unity with capitalism against which the revolt rises. *The political truce and support of the war are not two issues, but one.*

IN a never-ending stream explanation after explanation is poured out from the central office in the endeavour to stem the revolt ; frantic denials that there is a political truce ; tortuous explanations that there is only an " electoral stand-still agreement."

> There is not, never has been, and never will be a political truce. The electoral agreement can be ended if circumstances make it necessary to do so ; it is a travesty of fact to use this agreement as a peg on which to hang the charge that Labour is " lining up " behind the Government (Labour Press Service, April 10, 1940).

With this may be compared the statement of Greenwood :

> Without the help and support of the Labour movement the Government could not stand in office for another day (Arthur Greenwood, House of Commons, September 21, 1939).

The denials are vain. No one is deceived. Everyone knows that there is a political truce, and that the abandonment of by-election fights is only the tiniest expression of it. *The real truce is the unity in policy with capitalism and the capitalist parties, and that unity is the inevitable consequence of support of the war, which dominates every political, social and economic issue.*

HENCE the absurdity of the arguments of that tiny group of agile propagandists of Transport House and imperialism who seek to confuse the issue by proclaiming themselves against the political truce, but for the war. That caricature will not deceive any serious working-class fighter

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and socialist. Where the revolt is rising strongly, and the standard official case is desperate, that caricature may for a short time confuse the Movement, as in the case of the South Wales miners' vote, but not for long. Of what use solemnly to put up a by-election candidate against a Government candidate, only in order that, when returned he should vote all the supplies and measures required for the war, that is, support the Government on every decisive issue and record the same votes which the Government candidate would have recorded? This "opposition" is as threadbare as the demand that the war must be prosecuted and paid for, but without any cost falling on the workers. And indeed it is noticeable that this same group of would-be "left war-socialists" have already trodden the inevitable path of their melancholy policy and come out as open supporters of the general lines of the Keynes Plan for Increasing Misery, and demanded the imposition of compulsory taxation of the workers' wages. The logic of support of the war cannot be escaped. The fight against the political truce involves the fight against the war. The defence of the workers' interests is an empty phrase, if the fight against the war is not faced.

BEHIND the issue of the political truce lies the issue of Coalition. The one prepares the other as its final outcome; the margin between the two is in reality a thin one. The preliminary kite-flyings have already been conducted to make the issue familiar to the movement; and those preliminary overtures have already made clear that for the leadership the question of Coalition is not a question of Whether but When and How.

> Among some Labour members the view is taken that, provided vital pledges are given both in regard to the war and the subsequent peace, any invitation should be considered (*Reynolds News*, March 24, 1940).
>
> Labour leaders, who cannot of course lightly dismiss any serious proposals for association with the Government, if they are made, must, in considering them, always have in mind that such an arrangement would bring strong opposition from large sections of the Labour Party (*Daily Herald*, March 26, 1940).

The *Reynolds News* ballot for a Coalition Cabinet is similar preparation. The French example has already shown the way.

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The more rapid process in France is the reflection of the more critical situation. But the same logic works in England. Endorsement of the policy of the Executive means already endorsement in principle of a future Coalition when the emergency arises. Such a War Coalition—the final outcome of the policy of opposition to a People's Front against capitalist reaction—would be a coalition with the most reactionary chauvinist representatives of monopoly capital, not only for the purpose of imperialist war, but for war on the working class at home and war on socialism abroad. The example of the French " Socialist " Ministers (who entered office on the day that the Communist Deputies entered the dock) has already shown this. And the joint propaganda campaign of the Front Benchers now further prepares the way in Britain.

THE Labour Party Executive is steering a course for war on the Soviet Union. The Second International has set itself the rôle of leadership of the world counter-revolution. This is the reality behind the attempts to shuffle the cards between Fascism and Communism under cover of the magic phrase " totalitarianism." The Finnish episode has thrown glaring light on this and revealed the future alignment of forces. When the Labour Party leadership lined up with the White Guard forces, with Mannerheim, Mussolini and Franco, with Phillimore and all the Franco supporters in Britain, in support of armed warfare against socialism, they showed where they stand and where their whole course leads in the world situation.

> Mr. D. R. Grenfell, the British Labour M.P., in an address to Labour and trade union officials (in Australia), said that if Great Britain were forced to declare war against Soviet Russia, the British Labour movement would stand solidly behind that decision (*Times*, February 28, 1940).

That declaration was made on the very day that the Anglo-French military expedition was ready to leave against the Soviet Union. Not a single member of the Labour Party can afford to take this lightly or fail to understand what it means for the future in the deep world conflicts that are in front.

IT is here that the question of the expulsion of D. N. Pritt from the Executive and from membership of the Labour

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Party takes on such crucial significance. For Pritt was not expelled for any breach of discipline. He was expelled for supporting the Socialist State and failing to support the White Guard Mannerheim. In the words of his letter to the Labour Party Executive demanding the right to be heard at the Conference:

> I should like to make it clear that I do not regard myself as having in any way violated the Constitution, or as having committed any breach of discipline or departed from the policy or programme as laid down by Conference. On the contrary, I have sought throughout to fulfil the mandate entrusted to me by the membership in the interests of the Labour movement and of socialism.
>
> My difference of opinion with the majority of the Executive —and it is for opinions that I have been expelled—was found in my two books "Light on Moscow" and "Must the War Spread?" In those books I stated facts which, however unpalatable to some people, have to be faced, and gave arguments against any launching of war by this country against the Soviet Union.
>
> Very grave issues are raised for the future of the Labour Party if it is to be taken as contrary to its policy and discipline to support the one Socialist State in the world, and oppose war being launched against it by the National Government, whilst at the same time it is to be highly orthodox to support Mannerheim, and to co-operate with Mussolini and Franco and with Phillimore and the rest of the friends of Fascism in this country.

The question that is here raised is more than the question of an individual or of minority rights within the Labour Party. It is the acid test for every socialist in the Labour Party, between the policy of support of socialism and support of counter-revolution.

THE decisions of Bournemouth will not be the final decisions of the working-class movement. The conditions of the Conference can only reflect in a very distorting mirror the wishes and feelings of the workers in the lower organisations of the trade unions and the local parties, or of the mass of the workers in the factories and the workshops, who hold the real power and will in the end show their real will in action. Few are the socialists who can get through the fine mesh of the elaborate sifting precautions to reach to the

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Conference floor. But the fight at Bournemouth is none the less of vital importance, precisely because here is the sounding-board of the existing Labour movement, and this is the Conference on which the Labour Party will henceforth be historically judged. It is vitally important that at this Conference a stand shall be made, that the fight shall be proclaimed and a clear platform presented, on the basis of the principles of international socialism and of unyielding struggle for the interests and victory of the working class, against all the policies of betrayal and disaster, by whatever body of socialists and militant working-class delegates can win representation. Such a stand is of decisive significance at the present stage, not so much in relation to the immediate votes to be cast, as for its reflection in the wider movement, and to provide a rallying ground for the awakening forces all over the country. After Bournemouth the necessary decisions will have to be taken for the further development of the movement and the advance of the struggle.

R. P. D.

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The War Opens Out

BY QUÆSTOR

" THIS IS THE opening of a war to the death such as the world, for all its wars, has not yet seen." Had Marx heard Garvin smacking his lips over these monstrous prospects (*Observer*, April 15), he would have spared Thiers, the executioner of the Paris Commune, the title of " monstrous gnome " ; for in 1871 it was a question of thousands of corpses, in 1940 of millions. And in those words speaks the soul, not only of British Imperialism, but of capitalism the world over—that unutterably foul, barbarous, bloody-jawed monster which feeds even in peacetime on the strength of millions, and in wartime drinks their very lifeblood—" in defence of civilisation," of course.

For one cannot deny Garvin this groundwork of fact, that the events of the second week in April have unquestionably made possible the rapid transformation of the European war into one covering the whole world. Sweden the next victim of Allied intrigue or German " protection " : the Balkans as the theatre for some counterblow or " daring initiative," on one side or the other : Mussolini tempted thereby to throw the lives of forty million Italians also into the furnace, and Africa as well as the Near East immediately dragged in : attacks on Soviet shipping in the Black Sea, thrown open by the beginning of war in the Balkans, developing into a general attack on the Soviet Union—these are only some of the prospects which were opened, and publicly discussed, by the capitalist press during the very first week after the Allied minelaying in Norwegian territorial waters and the German invasion of Denmark and Norway. " New fronts for old " was the lesson of our survey two months ago : the events of April 8-9 have made that lesson terribly relevent.

Who would have thought in February that the Scandinavian countries were to be used as anything more than a base for Allied operations against the U.S.S.R. ? Yet it was remarkable that well on into March, when their intelligence services must have told them that the Finnish resistance was on the point of collapsing, Chamberlain and Daladier —on their own public admission—were exercising the utmost pressure on Finns and Scandinavians alike to give them a pretext for sending 100,000 troops to Northern Norway. They did not stick at trifles, either. *On* the very day the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty was being signed (March 12), the Swedish Foreign Minister was told a cock-and-bull story, on behalf of Lord Halifax, to the effect that the Finns had " urgently requested " Britain and France to ask him for transit of Allied troops. (*Manchester Guardian*, April 2.)

The true meaning of this anxiety, as *Izvestia* has pointed out, is

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now clear. It was by now a question no longer of succour for Mannerheim, but of a pretext for procuring a base in northern Scandinavia. Once again, as in August, 1939, the Allied rulers had been foiled of their plans for war on the U.S.S.R. and were striving to turn their very failure to advantage—against their German rival. This should be borne in mind when the Fleet Street hacks conveniently forget the mysterious British Notes sent to Norway and Sweden on April 5—still unpublished, but said to be of a threatening character (see the *Daily Herald* and the *Yorkshire Post* of April 6)—and forget likewise the chorus of swaggering allusions, all that week, to the "initiative" the Allied Governments were taking out of Hitler's hands.

"Yes, but Hitler started it," they reply. These twentieth-century cannibals, who stood round and sneered while Basque children starved and died under the British Navy's blockade of Bilbao in aid of Franco, now raise their hands in horror at Nazi brutality—that same brutality which they willingly used for their own purposes, so long as these could thereby be served. Uriah Heep who, a month earlier, was announcing that no "legal technicalities" would stand in the way of Allied troops landing in Norway, if Finland but gave the excuse, and had just provoked strong protests in Norway, Sweden, Holland, and elsewhere by minelaying in violation of Norwegian sovereignty, now complains that the Nazis have stolen a march on him—as though Hitler and his allies had shown themselves greater respecters of humanity and international law in the days when Chamberlain and Daladier were licking their boots.

As a final argument, Chamberlain points to the obvious fact that the invasion was prepared long beforehand. But this only enhances his own responsibility, as the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out on April 10:

> It is almost a fortnight since Britain and France, according to reports, decided to stop the iron ore traffic down the Norwegian coast. It must be assumed that they and their General Staffs foresaw the possible consequence of such a move. Mr. Chamberlain argues plausibly that the German stroke in Denmark and Norway was long prepared, and it is common knowledge that an attack might have taken place at any moment during the Finnish war. We ought, therefore, to be able to assume that the Allies recognised that they must reckon with the likelihood of this new aggression . . . . The Governments and their General Staffs must have made their systematic plans to deal with these new needs.

Not only did they "reckon with" such a likelihood, but they welcomed it with "something like cheerfulness," reported the political correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* the same day. "The moment has arrived for which the Allied forces have been preparing for months," wrote the *Star* on April 9. The war has been extended to Scandinavia by the Allies and Germany alike. That is the material point for British workers, and not whether it was the German bandits, or those whom Lenin once called "the wolves of Anglo-French imperialism," who

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took the final step to push the unfortunate Norwegian people into the war.

The full significance of this extension of the war has yet to be revealed. It certainly is not to be measured merely by the extra strain on German resources involved in the creation of a second front, nor yet by the advantages for air or submarine action which Germany would gain from a firm hold on the coasts of Western Scandinavia. And it is necessary to utter a warning against any readiness to believe that the Allied Governments have in any degree relaxed their malignant designs against the U.S.S.R. on account of their preoccupations with Germany.

Against whom did the National Government cherish, strengthen and encourage Hitler, between 1933 and 1939—if not the U.S.S.R. ? For what reason did it successively sacrifice the peoples of China, Austria, Ethiopia, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Memel, Albania—yes, and Poland itself, by rejecting the aid of the Red Army—to Hitler and his confederates ? Because Hitler was cast for the rôle of Crusader against the U.S.S.R.—a crusade in which both sides were to be weakened. That is why Lord Elton, Mr. Chamberlain's personal friend and National Labour henchman, grinds his teeth to-day at the people who made it " quite impossible for the British and French Governments to pursue the policy . . . . of leaving the barbarism of Berlin to a death struggle in the East with the barbarism of Moscow " (letter to *The Times*, April 2).

When did Hitler become enemy No. 1 ; when did the immense war machine which Mr. Chamberlain had helped him to build up—and to test in the war against the Spanish Republic—suddenly become a direct menace to the British Empire ? At the moment when Hitler refused to fight the U.S.S.R., giving notice that the invasion of Poland, for which he had obviously prepared, would be a move against Britain and France (through Roumania and the Black Sea), and not against the Soviet Union.

Did the hatred and enmity of the British ruling class toward the U.S.S.R. diminish because of this change in preoccupation ? No. The course of the Finnish war showed that. So have their arrogant and evasive replies to the Soviet Government's offers to improve relations (like Maisky's announcement of readiness to begin trade negotiations, on March 27). Above all, their silent encouragement of the vile campaign in the French press for war on the U.S.S.R.—for example, the *Temps* demand on March 28 to " treat Russia as our enemy," and to " decide quickly " on war—continues to show whither their mind is bent.

This aspect of the establishment of British forces in northern Norway, and of their entry into the Baltic, must not be overlooked. Even more urgently must it be remembered should the war extend to the Balkans, and the Turkish Government seize this pretext for allowing Allied warships to pass through the Dardanelles into the Black Sea.

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It was not mere coincidence, surely, that called forth such a crop of lying provocations against the Soviet Union, in the days immediately following the German invasion of Denmark and Norway ?

" I expect Sweden to be invaded by both Nazi and Soviet divisions. The troops now landing in Norwegian ports will have to hold on there until Sweden is beaten. Then they will receive the support of a great Russo-German army of occupation . . . . *At all costs, the Allies should try to forestall this manœuvre* " (interview with Otto Strasser in the *News Chronicle*, April 10).

" Before I left Helsinki ten days ago, I learned from a first-class source that Germany and the Soviet Union were suspected of a new agreement carving Northern Scandinavia into respective spheres of interest or exploitation . . . . I write on April 10. I have not heard of any Soviet evacuation from Petsamo. And there is that other odd article 6 of the Peace Treaty, which gives the Russians unfettered transit rights, including air transit, over the Petsamo district to Norway . . . . The reports from Sweden are persistent about new demands made by Russia on Finland . . . . *We stand before the possibility of an open Russo-German alliance and a war against both these brutal and marauding powers* " (article by G. L. Steer in the *Daily Telegraph*, April 11).

What boots it to the *Daily Telegraph* that the " reports from Sweden " have proved as blackguardly lies as all their predecessors : or that the Red Army's evacuation of Petsamo, of which Mr. Steer " had not heard " on April 10, was carried out on that very day (*Times*, April 12) in strict accordance with the Peace Treaty ? As little as it did to the majority of the capitalist newspapers, that Reuters, on April 11, issued a Soviet denial of the infamous story they had printed about German troops travelling to Narvik through Murmansk ! Only the *Daily Mail* had the common honesty to print the denial (April 12).

Only very simple people, after all this, can fail to realise that there is more than meets the eye, also, in the hopeful talk of Allied " initiative " in the Balkans. For example, a special trading corporation is formed by the Government to " take the initiative " in the Balkans ; and the *Times* hastens to print a long article by its Balkans correspondent (April 12) warning the Government that this policy will fail " if it is not accompanied by an armaments policy conceived on a generous scale." A special meeting of the Turkish Cabinet was called on April 9, reports the Istanbul correspondent of the *News Chronicle* (April 10), to discuss " what Turkey's reaction to the Allied demand for co-operation in a Near Eastern offensive campaign would be " (be it noted : " *the* Allied demand "). And he continues :

> Ankara circles are speculating on the possibilities of an Allied push towards the Caucasian oilfields, as a logical move after Norway's resistance to Germany. Capture of the Russian oilfields at Baku, or their destruction by British planes, would leave Germany . . . . with only the Rumanian oilfields as an oil source.

But the correspondent is not particular about that particular way

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of setting fire to the Balkans and the Near East. Any other way would do, at a pinch. And so we find him cabling—and, more important, the *News Chronicle* printing under big headlines (April 12)—that, even though Yugoslavia has denied rumours that the Germans had demanded "economic control of the Danube" (whatever that may mean), Turkish circles "expect a similar move in the immediate future" —which would make a declaration of war by Turkey "inevitable." This would give her the right to open the Dardanelles to her Allies, and thus their fleets could enter the Black Sea—to protect Yugoslavia? Oh no—"to stop German trade with the Russian oilfields." Back we come again to the "logical move."

But there are other immediate steps possible. On April 9 and 10, the London press was pouring scorn on a German "fairy story" about British plots to blow up the Iron Gates, through which supplies moving up the Danube to Germany must pass. On April 11 the *Times* correspondent at Belgrade cabled to his paper, as an example of wilful exaggeration, that "several days ago a Danube barge capsized and sank" which became in the hands of pro-German propagandists a story that "a convoy of German barges had been blown up." Now the curious thing is that on April 2 the *Daily Mail* had printed a big article by one of its editors, Mr. Gordon Beckles, from Giurgiu, on the Danube, dealing with the difficulties of oil transport from Roumania which the Germans were encountering. He concluded with the following remarkable words:

> I could not help reflecting, when looking at the Iron Gates yesterday, upon what would happen if its narrow navigable channel were ever accidentally blocked. Not a proper thought in a neutral country?

And, to round off our picture of the various ways in which Great Powers, bent upon extending the war to the Balkans and sending their warships to the Black Sea, can get to work, there are the following suggestions by Mr. Duff Cooper, formerly First Lord of the Admiralty and quite lately one of a team of propagandist lecturers for Great Britain in the U.S.A. (*Daily Mail*, April 12):

> No time should be lost in forming a solid bloc in the South-East of Europe, pledged not only to resist attack but to assist the Allies in inflicting a shattering defeat upon Germany's military forces . . . . In forming this consolidated south-east European bloc, England and France should take the initiative and should lay down the terms. There is no time to haggle; too often have we been too late. We must not ask questions as to what these small Powers want, nor listen to explanations of what they are prepared or not prepared to do. Having made plain to them that it is their own freedom and independence that are at stake, we must tell them frankly what we demand—what part each of them has got to play in the alliance that is to destroy the German menace. *If one or the other of them shows signs of hesitation, we must so act as to ensure that such hesitation will be immediately overcome. It is time also that similar measures were taken with regard to Holland and Belgium.*

Mr. Duff Cooper is not a young irresponsible, but a Privy Councillor. In comparison with his frank and businesslike tones, even General

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Sir Edmund Ironside—Commander of the British invaders of Soviet Russia, 20 years before he became Chief of the Imperial General Staff—sounded a little amateurish when he suggested (*Daily Telegraph*, April 6) that the U.S.S.R. had been " put right out " by the Finnish war, but that, if it wanted another war, there were still other peoples, " —for instance, Japan."

General Ironside may have learned nothing from the ludicrous fiasco of his prophecy to American correspondents in London, in January, that the turning point of the Finnish war would come in May. Indeed, judging from the accompanying stale claptrap about " bad Russian communications," " bad system of distribution," " just as in the Crimean War," it is even probable that he has learned nothing. But the Japanese generals have had two very hard knocks from the Red Army—in 1938 and 1939, and possibly they are less anxious to serve as an alternative front than General Ironside would have them. At all events, he did his best.

And that is what they are all doing—all the imperialists, both master and lackey, both civil and military: all doing their best to widen the war, to drag in new peoples, to involve the Soviet Union if possible, to make millions of human beings the pawns of their struggle for markets and profits, for " Lebensraum " British and German.

READERS' DISCUSSION GROUPS

LABOUR MONTHLY Readers' Discussion Groups have been formed in the following districts:—

Blackburn	Oxford
Bradford	Pinner, Middlesex
Circle House, E.1.	St. Pancras
Edgware and Mill Hill	Southsea
Finchley	Stamford Hill
Halifax	Stockton-on-Tees
Hampstead	Stoke Newington
Hampstead Garden Suburb	Walthamstow
Islington	Warrington

A Medical Group is also meeting regularly.

Will any reader who wishes to be put in touch with a local Group write to Discussion Groups, LABOUR MONTHLY, 49 Doughty Street, W.C.1.

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Bournemouth Inquest

BY IVOR MONTAGU

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE of the Labour Party will be able to report to the Bournemouth Conference that the abject position they have sought and worked for has been achieved. By rejecting the Popular Front movement which might have carried Labour into power, they secured for themselves the safe rôle of Chamberlain's Yes-men. The *News Chronicle* publishes the figures of the British Institute of Public Opinion, showing that the Opposition supporters among the public are just as resolute as Government supporters in favouring a Tory Prime Minister, the only difference being that the Opposition prefers Eden. *Reynolds*, co-operative organ, elects by a poll of its readers numerous Tories to Cabinet offices, among them Simon as Chancellor of the Exchequer, the most ruthless butcher of living standards, the most generous subsidiser of magnates, that the British working class has ever known.

Could there be a more conclusive exhibition of the spirit that Molotov called "the servants' hall"? As for a brief instant the leadership poses at Bournemouth, daring to face their annual ordeal of an encounter with the delegates from their membership, now that it has been carefully pre-purified from all conspicuous critics by what is coming to be a regular pre-conference spring cleaning process, as they bask in the gentle plaudits from the press of the millionaires they serve, how reminiscent will be the scene of that other, at Potsdam, where the spotlights played upon the as yet unjailed remnants of German Social Democracy, raising their hands in vote with Hitler, on the same issue, national unity against the wicked enemy without.

Two paths lay before Labour organisation in Britain at the time of its political inception. That designed was *independent Labour representation*, the representation of the organised working class not in identity with one of the existing capitalist parties, but separately, for the political expression of separate interests; this was the idea of the founders of the Labour Party.

But this path could only be reached by way of Marxism. The recognition of a cleavage of interest between the capitalist class and the working class, recognition of developing difficulties for the capitalist class which it cannot solve, and can only try, vainly, to solve by wars and attacks upon the conditions of the workers, recognition of the only solution as the elimination of the capitalist class and the institution of socialism, the only force to achieve it, the strengthening of the working class, and the only method its resistance and counter blows against the inevitable attacks upon it.

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The path followed was that of *class collaboration.* The unity of the household above and below stairs. The *independence* of the labour movement consisting in a kind of butler's rôle, *knowing one's place.* " Sir—(a discreet cough)—the servants might be more contented, things might run more smoothly, if . . . . " thus the whispered hint in his ear when master is flush and can afford a few gratuities. " Where is your gratitude, remember that he provides our bread and butter," thus the stern warning to restive fellow domestics lined up in the hall, when it is a question of half-a-crown a week off, or sacking a few, just temporarily you know, because master has taken a nasty toss on the Stock Exchange.

By priding itself on British " lack of theory " and " practicality of outlook," the Labour leadership at the first contrived to retain a confusing veil of lip-service to the postulates of the first path, while in reality practising a conduct one hundred per cent. obsequious to the second path.

Thus in 1912 the Labour Party was among those which, at the International Socialist Congress held in Basle, all pledged themselves to take advantage of " the economic and political " crisis caused by war to rouse the masses in order to hasten the downfall of capitalist rule.

" The Congress calls upon the workers of all countries to oppose to capitalism the might of the international solidarity of the proletariat," declared the resolution.

Yet in 1914 it was immediately " class truce," " national defence," unity of the household (" almost a family ") in its " hour of danger."

Following the first world war, when the working class, led by the only party in the Second International (the Bolsheviks) that had remained faithful to the Basle resolution, broke through international capitalism on a sector of its front, the influence of every other party in Social Democracy was devoted to restraining every other national section of the working class from doing anything so " ungrateful " or " imprudent " as to follow its example. What was the argument ?

The Russian working class had had to pay for victory the price of struggle. The struggle had extorted sacrifice, in treasured lives, and had left national economy in ruins—a desolation which the liberated force of the working class, organised in Socialism, was to make blossom at a rate unprecedented in history before the lapse of half a generation.

But the Social Democratic leadership of British Labour, lacking all faith, spokesmen of the virtue of " knowing one's place," now pointed to the cost of struggle to justify openly " the other path," collaboration of employer and employee (Mond-Turnerism), peaceful persuasion, " constitutionalism " (which means a contract in advance never to protest by more than words against any blow, however unconstitutional, that the enemy may deal), these were the methods that would lead to *genuine progress, liberty for all,* and *no bloodshed.*

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What a frightful joke history has played upon this theory !

Not only is the world which Social Democracy held back from revolution engaged to-day in deadly warfare, slashing working-class conditions to poverty, and ending human liberties won centuries ago, while the world (under Bolshevik leadership) that went through the fire of revolution, stands to-day unscorched by the war, having achieved socialism, improving its living conditions sensibly moment by moment and continually broadening its experience of practical democracy.

Not only this, but in the capitalist world it is *precisely* that Social Democracy which renounced revolution to guarantee *progress, freedom and no bloodletting*, which to-day can find no better programme than to stand in the *forefront* of these urging the expansion of slaughter and the placing of burdens and restrictions on the working class !

Let us just see where " support for the war " has brought Labour Party policy to-day.

It has meant the hypocritical swallowing of reactionary war aims. Airy dreams about the new Jerusalem, " avoiding the mistakes of the League of Nations," federalisation—the sort that *we* would impose (if anybody asked *us*) when the war is over—goes hand in hand with strengthening during the war the grip of those who manifestly will *not* ask us and have manifestly different intentions (of which the Faroe islands form an instalment).

It has meant the swallowing at home of mounting burdens on the working class, the growing grip on industry of the monopoly sections of the capitalist class, " lest we injure the war effort."

It has meant the swallowing abroad of backing for the most monstrous and murderous policies against the masses.

In France—60-hour week ; fifteen per cent. tax on wages ; forty per cent. tax on overtime ; compulsory labour discipline ; conscription of female labour ; the guillotine for a leaflet ; smashing of unions ; executions at the front ; abrogation of the constitution, secret military trial and deprivation of mandate against deputies for suggesting that parliament be called together. From the Labour leadership—sitting on committees with its French opposite numbers—not even the squeak uttered by some liberal papers.

In Spain—over a million Republicans in jail, economy at a standstill, semi-starvation general, scores of executions daily even now, one year after hostilities have ceased—and three million pounds from the British Government to bolster up this tyranny. From the Labour leadership—loud, silent protest.

To Japan—the Prime Minister declares his love and understanding for Japanese ideals (at the Guildhall) the day after 2,000 Chinese are killed in a single air raid ; the British Ambassador in Tokio, backed up by Halifax, explains Britain's deep sympathy based on the fact that Japan is trying to do for law and security in Asia precisely what Britain is seeking to accomplish in Europe. From the Labour leader-

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ship—a few twitters, and then turn back to continue pursuit of this object in Europe.

India—demands its share of the "liberty" which the war of the Allies is said to be enlarging. Labour leadership proclaims the Government's attitude to be the "crucial test." The Government responds by announcing in advance its refusal to accept a verdict on their future from the Indian people, arrests the secretary of the Congress Socialist Party (brother party to the Labour Party) and throws hundreds of Indian labour and trade union leaders into jail without trial or charge. The Labour leadership blinks, takes all this down its gullet without even a tickle—and continues supporting the Government.

Why?

"Because" (they cry), "it is a war against Nazi-ism."* This though they know that those controlling the war are the chief friends of Nazi-ism, though Sir Nevile Henderson parades his fondness for Goering,† though genuine anti-Nazis are thrust into Allied concentration camps, and though the only means by which a German refugee can get visas to travel freely across every Allied frontier, or a ticket of admission to the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, is for him to have been a member of the Nazi party up to about ten minutes ago or to have given at least twenty millions to help Hitler into power.

"Because" (they cry), "it is a war to free Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland." (Not to free India, the Irish northern counties, Syria or Palestine.)‡

But it is not that the Labour Party only follows those policies, justifying them or endorsing them by silence, it is that to-day *it makes the pace when Chamberlain lags.*

While sections of the imperialists, having armed and incited Finland, dithered before the last disaster, Transport House led the *holloa* for the anti-Soviet war.§

While the French Right hesitated, the French Socialists were the first to call for death and repression for the Communists. Sir Walter Citrine was the first to justify over here the suppression undertaken.

It was Socialist spokesmen in France and Labour spokesmen in the House of Commons who *pressed* for the extension of the war, *pressed* for the action against Norway which, by forcing Hitler's hand, has saved for the moment the Reynaud Government and rescued for the moment the Allies from their worst danger to date, the developing separate peace movement in France, at the little cost of bleeding the Norwegian people and making their homes a battleground.

Hark to two gentlemen, who defend the war in the name of restraining

*Not (please note) "against fascism." *Order of the Ministry of Information*: Don't Offend Mussolini.

†"A scoundrel, but not a dirty scoundrel."

‡Not (please note) Albania or Abyssinia. *Orders of the Ministry of Information*: Don't Offend Mussolini.

§The vanguard rôle of Transport House in inciting the actual failure of the first Finnish negotiations will be revealed by history.

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Hitler's violation of all law and protecting from him small countries, two gentlemen in the front rank of vituperators of the Soviet Union for seeking common measures to safeguard its own security and that of its small neighbours.

Dr. Dalton, at Edmonton, April 13 :

> Our blockade is hamstrung by antediluvian conceptions . . . . We sit poring over dusty tomes on international law while Hitler strikes where he chooses. The time has come to say : "Shut up that book" . . . . We have the right, in their own interest no less than in ours, to ration neutrals strictly . . . . ("*We have the right*," "*We are the judge*," "*in their own interest*," "*under our protection*"—it has a reminiscent ring.)

M. Blum, in the *Populaire*, April 3 :

> Up to now the efficiency of the blockade has been restricted or prevented because the Allies felt themselves obliged to proceed cautiously or to respect certain legal formalities. This will change . . . .
>
> The problems of neutrality should have been faced frankly and courageously a long time ago . . . . *There has never been a war in which the neutrals were the real stake* and yet in which they were either anxious or indifferent onlookers. There has never been a war the issue of which depended to such an extent on the way in which the written laws of neutrality are interpreted and applied, for these laws can either be *interpreted in the letter with a cowardly hypocrisy, or applied in the spirit with tenacity and courage*. There has never been a war in which these written laws, *resulting from long-standing diplomatic contracts*, appear so *out-of-date*, so *out of touch with reality*, so *incompatible with modern conceptions* of international law . . . .
>
> The Allies cannot remain indefinitely prisoners of *precedent*, of *routine*, and of chicanery . . . . If they did so they would expose themselves to serious risks, *without exposing the neutrals to the same risks*. (What apt apes are Hitler's pupils !)

Who was it first invited Keynes to the House and the National Trade Union Club to "explain" his scheme to soak the working class ? Who has helped him and advised him how to mitigate the shock by dressing it up in Father Christmas cloak and whiskers ?

Reynolds is a left-wing (?) paper.

Truly, left is right and right is left in Social Democracy. Here is Brailsford, revealing the infinite capacity of his gorge :

> The only way of escape (from political crisis in France—I.M.) was to fight in earnest. But where ? There is no Siegfried Line in Norway. And so it has happened that the war has been "spread." Hitler did it, but we gave him his occasion, and his action responds to the wishes and interests of our two Governments.
>
> Had we the right to bring disasters on our neighbours, knowing very well that the Germans would spare neither their lives nor their liberties ? We risked for them the fate of Poland . . . . Now that it has happened political considerations forbid us to hesitate . . . . Every instinct of self-preservation calls on our manhood to be worthy of its heritage.

Brailsfordese for "Back up the Government again. Our Fuehrers, right or wrong."

Could Dr. Ley do better, to bring support behind a *Labour Front ?*

Our intellectual Hun-haters offer prolific explanations of some

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" obscure defect in the German mentality " which accounts for so many in the Nazi Reich (" often genuinely nice people, you know ") remaining blind to the crimes their Government commits or, even aware of them, lending them their support.

The " obscure defect " of the British Labour leader is that he does not need a rubber truncheon to make him behave in precisely the same way.

Both Socialism and Democracy have disappeared from Social Democracy. To the first, not even lip service is paid any more in the vocabulary of the British " Labour Front."

The original draft of the statement on war policy issued by the National Executive of the Labour Party (February 9) entirely omitted the word " Socialist." On one member suggesting it be included somewhere " for old time's sake " it was allowed in in two places. (The member has since been expelled.)

In " Hitler's War " by the leading (!) foreign affairs specialist of the Labour leadership, Dalton, we find also two mentions of Socialism, one to say it is unpopular with " planners," a second time as an adjective applied to a New Zealander.

Here is the considered opinion of this " Socialist " expert on the casuses of the war :

> My conclusion is that, in this interval (since the 1914 war—I.M.) both economics and politics went badly wrong, and that, if either one or the other had gone moderately right, we should neither have had Hitler in power in Germany, nor be at war to-day.

Here is the considered opinion of the same deep thinker on how to make them " go right." It follows explanatory quotations from Rousseau, Delaisi, Galsworthy and Keynes (" I share with Mr. Keynes . . . .") :

> . . . . stepping over the foul Nazi carcass, we must choose our road into the future. We must turn aside from the way of Strife and Scarcity, of Massacre and Misery, into the way of Peace and Plenty.

Durbin's book (reviewed in the April LABOUR MONTHLY by G. A. Hutt), the choice of the Labour Book Service with Herbert Morrison's blessing, is precise on two points :

Socialism is now to be " substantial control " by the state, without " deep injury to private interests," providing a system in which the worker must " abandon the hope of rapid social betterment for some considerable time." *Democracy* is " a contract between the Parties contending in the state not to persecute each other." While a revolutionary party is small it is " not expedient " to suppress it. Let the Communists obtain a decisive political position by entirely constitutional means, and then Tory and Labour, for the sake of " democratic logical consistency," must unite to suppress them.

Democracy, the ever more prominent shibboleth, retaining this slender hold in theory, is annihilated in practice. From its reality, *rule by the people*, policy resolution by discussion, followed by delega-

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tion, and instruction of the delegated, they flee as from the plague.

Shedding the blood of millions "for democracy," coincides with a political truce in parliamentary elections, cessation of municipal elections, members of the National Executive prescribing *No Questions* as a condition of addressing branches, voting at conference by delegates who have not consulted their constituents, forbidding of discussion in branches and trades councils of certain subjects, forbidding of discussion with certain people, expulsion for passing of resolutions, suppressing of knowledge of resolutions and the numbers supporting them, etc., etc.

Brick wall.

No socialism. No democracy. Support of or silence about every action of the capitalist imperialists. Making the pace for them in their bloodiest adventures and those most directly turned against the working class. All prospect of government abandoned, readiness to serve in whatever rôle assigned. All prospect of improved conditions abandoned, programme for worsening conditions.

Precisely the *social rôle* of a Fascist labour front. Without the knout, yet, in Britain* but not uneager for that.

Why ? How has the British labour movement come to this impasse ?

Precisely because this is the logical end of class collaboration and the only alternative to it is class struggle.

Unity with the ruling class must, *in the end, in crisis*, at any moment when the said ruling class is in danger, mean *against* the working class. Unity *of* the working class, splitting of the link between middle and capitalist class, isolation and defeat of the capitalists is the sole alternative.

All the talk about not uniting with Communists because they advocate bloodshed, because of their dictatorship, because they are unconciliatory, etc., etc., is exposed as so much dishonesty, assumed to veil *the real refusal*, refusal to accept the policy of unity of the working class in the class struggle.

Suppose Communists had taken, *in the interest of the working class*, and against the employers, the measures that have been taken in France to-day against the workers, what an outcry, what a holy jehad in the name of democracy the labour leadership would have summoned. Because these measures are taken against the working class, against Communists, against democratic discussion, in the interest of the French ruling class, and for continuing imperialist war, they are acceptable.

Mrs. Barbara Gould, Chairman of the Labour Party, who could sit in a Barcelona hotel during an air raid and refuse the plea of a Spanish socialist comrade to appear on an all-party platform in Paris in aid of the child victims, on the grounds that Senator Cachin was to be one of the speakers, sits cheerfully on a Finnish Aid Committee, for Mannerheim and against the Soviet Un on, by the side of Lords

*Citrine's declaration that, in Britain, the Communists are "easier to deal with in the open."

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Phillimore and Plymouth.

Why do they so hate Communism and the U.S.S.R. ? Precisely because of this, *history has decided their struggle with Communism for the leadership of the working class, and decided it not in their favour.*

Henceforward they can no longer differentiate themselves in policy from the capitalist class. They are unmasked.

The social basis for Social Democracy existed in the days of the prosperity of capitalism. When there was plenty to go round, the butler's whisper in the master's ear could gain sops. The policy of touching the forelock could appear speciously to be in the servants' interest.

But with crisis, there is less. No matter how humble the accent in which the whisper is couched, the master scowls. Since 1931 the day of easy butlering has been done. There is no third course now. Persuade the servant to accept the master's will, or join with him to resist the master. Prosperity, the social basis for the margin within which Social Democracy manœuvred for sops is gone. Crisis ! War ! Peril to Society ! Humbled by years of class collaboration, knowing his place, the Labour leader does not hesitate. He rallies to the rulers. Here is the reality of the MacDonald National Government of 1931, the Attlee electoral truce to-day.

But if the small benefits once securable by the Labour Party have dribbled to a stop, if, socially, the small-term usefulness for the worker of the class collaboration policy is now at an end,* precisely for that very social reason the *vital necessity* of the class collaboration policy to the capitalist is augmented.

The capitalist, having no sop to give, *must* conceal the narrow class self-interest of his policy. The butler is worth more to him. He can have a rise. A seat in the Cabinet, even, if the rest of the servants' hall will not lose confidence in him for taking it. For the servants have their appetites, and will grumble when made to go hungry, for all their domo's smarminess.

For this grumbling is the trouble. It is already a rumbling assuming the volume of a volcano. Examine the list of resolutions sent into the Conference for Bournemouth. Five demanding vigour in the fight for socialism. Resolutions against war finance subsidies to the rich and in favour of soaking them ; against the Means Test ; against unemployment ; for higher old-age pensions ; for higher service dependants' allowances ; for higher service pay ; against cuts in social services.

Every one of these resolutions by implication repudiates a situation accepted by the Parliamentary Labour Party within the procedure of

*Apologists for the Labour leadership made great play with the value of " Labour's fight " in Parliament. The value of a fight with the mouth that you pledge in advance never to make a fight with the hand (because of over-riding support for the war) is limited in a degree obvious from reason and experience. Example : the Old Age Pensions debates, that ended with the introduction of a Means Test principle and an increase less than the simultaneous rise in the cost of living.

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Parliament, and implies an aspiration for working-class gains that can to-day be won only by a class struggle not limited by that framework.

The repressions in France are denounced by a strongly worded resolution. A proportion of three to one of resolutions on Finland condemns the National Executive's hostility to the Soviet Union and support for Mannerheim.

Of fifty resolutions on the subject, every one denounces the election truce.

Of thirty-five resolutions on the war, only three support the Executive's attitude ; the rest call for a war aims formulation that will lead to peace, or for an immediate armistice, or for any end to it as an imperialist war.

With the steel bands of the *bloc* vote, misrepresentation, curtailment of discussion, expulsion of dissentients, the executive and their imperial taskmasters, together will strive desperately to hold the victim prisoner. He stirs, his aspirations are not dead. He will rise, and realise them only when he breaks these bands asunder, and becomes master in his own house.

A
FEDERATION
for WESTERN EUROPE
By W. IVOR JENNINGS
Author of Cabinet Government *and* Parliament

A really concrete contribution to the problem of Federation. Dr Jennings the well-known constitutional lawyer, discusses in detail a Draft Constitution for a Federation of Western Europe which he thinks will work ; he invites his readers to consider it, criticise it, and, if necessary to improve upon it.

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France's War on the Workers

BY F. RUSKIN

On April 1, M. Reynaud declared in a broadcast to the United States "We are Fighting for Liberty." M. Reynaud's deeds in the days that followed contrasted sharply with those brave words.

April 4—Military tribunal sitting in camera condemns 44 members of the French Parliament to long terms of imprisonment.

April 5—New decree introduces the death penalty for "preparing, stocking or distributing Communist literature."

April 6—Mass arrests of militant workers in Paris and other centres.

April 7—The general secretary and treasurer of the railwaymen's union, after six months in prison without trial, each sentenced to three years' imprisonment by the military tribunal, which cannot rest on Bank Holidays let alone Sunday.

April 8—Death penalty introduced for "demoralising the military or civilian population."

So one could continue the calendar day by day and week by week, presenting the true diary of the war—the war of the "two hundred families," of the neo-fascist politicians and all the other forces of reaction against their own working class. The war on the French working class preceded the declaration of war on Nazi Germany. Forty-eight hours before the ultimatum to Berlin expired, the French Government issued two decrees. One provided penalty of up to ten years' imprisonment and 10,000 francs fine for anyone who "exercises a disturbing influence on the morale of the army and the population." The other ordered:

Substitution of the 60 or 72-hour week for the 40 of the Popular Front:

Payment for the extra hours worked at approximately 60% of normal rates:

Deduction of 15% from the earnings of all men of military age (i.e., 18 to 50), and:

Cancellation of all provisions of all collective agreements.

Already, with a thoroughness only possible for a long prepared plan, the offices of the Communist Party's daily newspapers and numerous local publications had been closed down by the police and their properties confiscated.

From that time on, there has been no stalemate on the front *behind* the Maginot line. The attacks on the workers and their counter-moves against the onslaught have continued eight months without a break.

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While the rulers of France may be divided as to how best their foreign policy can realise the objective of restoring France's lost power in the world, they are united on the home policy. They are agreed that the gains on the Popular Front must be attacked and the main burden of the war placed on the workers. They are agreed, too, that the war provides an excellent cover for destroying the trade union and political organisations of the workers and so—they hope—creating a servile, fascist state which shall remove for ever the fears that the Popular Front—despite its weaknesses—once engendered.

The first and most important immediate problem facing the rulers of France was to extract the vastly increased output necessitated by the war at the expense of the workers. In the first half of 1939, industrial output was still only 75 per cent. of the 1930 peak figure, despite the vast armaments programme. The mobilisation of millions of men brought about a state of chaos in which production went down to 50 per cent. of the 1929 level. At present, although no official figures are issued, it is claimed that output is nearing the 1929 figure again. The method used in achieving this end was simplicity itself and no doubt has commended itself to British industrialists. Saturday and Sunday were made part of the working week and the hours increased to 11 or 12 a day for men and 10 (more if Ministry of Labour permission is granted) for women and juveniles. At the same time the intensity of work is greatly increased by giving the employers power to fine and in other ways penalise workers whose output is not satisfactory. A worker who is absent for a day because of sickness loses considerably more than a day's pay. If the worker has not the excuse of sickness, he may be brought before a military tribunal and sent to prison for anything up to five years. For working to rule the same sentence is provided. For spoilage, a worker runs the risk of being charged with sabotage for which imprisonment or death is laid down by decree. Quite apart from any such tangible offences, any worker displaying "an attitude" considered "inimical to the interests of national defence" is liable to banishment, concentration camp, or labour gang.

While production has been increased by what is best described as forced labour, another set of measures have been imposed so that the country's wage bill shall remain the same or even decreased. Where women and juveniles have been introduced into industry to replace the men mobilised they have done so at much lower rates of pay. The men not called up have 15 per cent. deducted from their wages each week. In addition for all the hours over 40 they receive only 60 per cent. of the normal rates. A worker who puts in a 60-hour week now receives, after deductions for overtime, special taxes, normal income tax and insurance, etc., just about the same pay packet as before the war when he worked 40 hours.

The "normal rates" for most factories are fixed by law at the rates prevailing on September 1, 1939. Thus wage demands to meet the

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cost of living increase of about 20 per cent. are illegal and the purchasing power of the workers is radically reduced.

To carry through this programme of longer hours, intensified production and lower pay, the French trade union movement, five millions strong and with a splendid record of struggle, had to be dealt with. The task was simplified by the reactionary cliques in the leadership whose readiness to serve the ends of French imperialism was heightened by their anger at the steady shift of the members' allegiance to revolutionary leadership. The reactionaries gladly accepted the rôle of leaders of a Nazi-model Labour Front, entering into an infamous partnership with the police in order to create it.

On October 12, Leon Jouhaux, Secretary of the C.G.T., declared in *Le Peuple* that " the struggle imposed on the democratic state by the totalitarian countries brings up the question of social values." What he meant was illustrated by the " joint declaration of the workers and employers " following conversations between the Minister of Armaments and C.G.T. representatives. This affirmed the necessity of increasing production. Unanimous agreement of employers and employed was necessary and " nothing now exists to prevent such agreement. The formulas opposed to it are now out of date." The delegates agreed that " there could be no place for the class struggle."

Jouhaux even went so far, when commenting on the meeting, as to say that " this joint declaration is not only applicable to our country. As is expressly stated it applies to all countries . . . . The new order at which we aim cannot be restricted to national limits."

In practice, the renunciation of the class struggle has inevitably involved Jouhaux and Company in the most intense class struggle France has known for years—but on the side of the employers. In unions where the majority of the leadership supported this traitorous policy, the minority were expelled and denounced as a preliminary to police action being taken against them. Where the majority of the leadership stood firmly for the interests of their members, the police would act first, arresting the leaders and confiscating the funds and properties. Then a new reconstituted (the Nazis also had a word for it—" gleichgeschaltet ") union would be set up by Jouhaux, leaders appointed to it and the funds and properties gratefully accepted from the hands of the police.

In this joint offensive of police and " socialists " against the workers, almost a thousand organisations have been broken up. Such powerful unions as the railwaymen's federation, the transport workers, chemical workers, textile federation, woodworkers and metalworkers have been robbed of all effectiveness and reduced to a fraction of their former membership. While the elected officials are in concentration camp and prison, Government stooges appoint themselves to leadership with the avowed aim of class collaboration.

But such despicable antics by already discredited " leaders " do not

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suffice to create a Labour Front. In Germany, ten years of demagogy had developed some mass basis for fascism. The Nazi party had members in the ranks of the working class and of the middle class ready to do the dirty work of fascism when the dictatorship should be set up. In France, however, the working class is overwhelmingly anti-fascist and has to its credit great successes in defeating the growth of fascism. In the localities and factories, therefore, the workers continue to struggle against the forces of reaction despite the treachery of the self-appointed leaders. Local actions, such as working to rule, mass deputations to employers, etc., are reported from many parts of the country. Illegal literature circulates widely from hand to hand and slogans appear overnight condemning the war and the infamous acts of the Daladier régime. The decrees providing for sentences of imprisonment up to ten years for "demoralising fellow workers," defeatist views, "tendencious information," etc., cannot stifle the opposition.

Little wonder that an ever-increasing number of the French workers shed their illusions about the supposedly democratic aims of the war, and although the Communist Party was driven underground, nevertheless support for its policy grew in all directions.

M. Chautemps, speaking in the Senate, had to admit that: "It is without doubt true that since the beginning of the war, Communist propaganda has been intensified."

The campaign of hate against the Soviet Union, a campaign far more ferocious and tendencious than that against Germany, and the outspoken desire to "switch the war" have made still clearer the true purposes of French imperialism. Even the Radical paper, *La Lumière* (March 29, 1940), was constrained to say that: "A certain number of French reactionaries are governed by the trend of domestic politics. They want this to be a war, not of the Democracies against Germany, but of the bourgeoisie against Communism, against even socialism and radicalism. In other words they take up Hitler's own slogans of a year ago. In the place of a war for France and Liberty they seek to substitute an ideological crusade. Frenchmen and Democrats, we will not march for this!"

It is against this background that the trial of the 44 Communist deputies is seen in its full significance. The original plan was to stage a great public trial in which those who stood for peace would be pilloried and the Soviet Union made the subject of endless abuse. The trial was, in fact, to be the preparation of the public mind for intervention in Finland and war against the Soviet Union. The plan failed utterly. A few days before the trial was to begin, the Soviet-Finnish peace was concluded and the reckless interventionist aims of the allies were exposed to the whole world. Preliminary publicity for the trial had evoked nothing but support for the deputies. So the plan was hurriedly changed. The trial, it was decided, must be held in secret and rushed through in four days with the minimum of publicity. Here again the

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plan went astray. While the deputies were unable to resist the holding of the trial in secret, since the military judges were quite unconcerned with legal rights, they did, however, prolong the trial for two weeks and made such full use of the minor legal opportunities presented that the general course of the trial was clear to all. As at Leipzig it was the judges who became nervous and weary, while the defence flayed the Government they represented. As Blanqui declared, and as champions of the people have always realised: "I am not before judges, but enemies. It is useless for me to defend myself. The rôle of accuser is the only one suited to the oppressed."

In this spirit the deputies indicted the reactionary measures of the French ruling class, exposed the true character of the war and defended the consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union. The trial, instead of serving the ends of the warmakers, became the high-water mark of the people's opposition to war and reaction.

It is now a month since the trial finished and the maximum sentence was passed on most of the deputies by the military officers of the tribunal in conformity with their orders from the Government. The trial will not, however, be forgotten by the world any more than the courageous stand made by the six Bolshevik members of the Duma and by Karl Liebknecht in the last war and of Dimitrov at Leipzig. As one of the deputies, Waldeck Rochet declared at the trial:

"In spite of your repression, in spite of your vile calumnies against us, you have not been able to destroy the faith of the French working people in their Communist Party. For the past six months the press has conducted a campaign of lies, telling the people that we are traitors, mercenaries and agents of a foreign power. The workers and the peasants were urged to desert the Communist Party and to follow the Government to victory 'in defence of liberty!' You have had to renew your efforts every week, astonished at the fact that the masses of working people in town and countryside refused to listen or respond to your appeals. And then the arrests and convictions were intensified throughout the country, showing quite openly that you had not for one moment succeeded in overcoming the convictions of those who have followed us for so long and who continue to follow us."

The truth of this declaration was immediately confirmed when, in the week after the trial ended, the death penalty was introduced for anyone found "preparing, stocking or distributing Communist literature" or "demoralising the military or civilian population" and a new wave of arrests took place. What more complete admission could there be that all the measures of persuasion and of compulsion had failed? Penalties of banishment, concentration camp, deportation and imprisonment for up to ten years had failed to stop the widespread agitation against the war and the attempts to turn France into a fascist dictatorship.

The French working class is fighting on with devotion and self-

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sacrifice—not against the people of Germany but against the rulers of France. Their cause is the cause of the working class everywhere and above all of the workers of Britain. It is Britain that for years has dictated policy to France and since the war began the dependance of France on Downing Street has become complete. What doubts can there be that the new ferocious measures in France have been introduced with at least the agreement of Chamberlain ? What doubt can there be that strong forces are at work for the introduction of repressive measures here ? The *Times* (April 9) commends M. Reynaud's actions " to suppress with unflinching severity every attempt at defeatist propaganda," while Professor Keynes and the other economists argue out the best means of effecting here the drastic cuts in wages already introduced in France.

Were it only a question of isolated development in France, there should be in this country a movement of solidarity as great as that evoked by the struggle of the Spanish people against fascism. But with the added menace that the events in France represent for our own conditions and rights, we cannot slacken our efforts until a powerful alliance is created of the French and British workers which will end the repression and bring peace and freedom to Europe.

LABOUR MONTHLY DEVELOPMENT FUND

	£	s.	d.
Previously Acknowledged	34	19	2
B.B.	1	0	0
Pinner L.M. Group	0	1	0
Medical Group	0	10	0
W. Wilson (Canada)	0	15	0
C. H. Baldry (South Africa)	0	3	0
Mill Hill L.M. Group	0	12	6
A. Boyd (Colombo)	0	4	10
J.L.J.	0	10	0
A Herts. Reader	1	0	0
R.R.	1	0	0
Two Comrades	5	0	0
New Comrade	1	0	0
James Dawson	0	5	0
J. D. Hancox	0	7	6
X.Y.Z.	0	3	0
Collection at Conference Concert (February 25)	30	0	9
TOTAL	£77	11	9

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India Before the Storm

BY MICHAEL CARRITT

SINCE THE OUTBREAK of war the political crisis in India has matured with extreme rapidity. All the difficulties of British Imperialism in India and its fundamental conflict with the interests and welfare of the Indian people have been increased a hundredfold by the war situation. All the sunshine talk of the propagandists and the feverish scurrying around of the apostles of " negotiation " and " honourable compromise " have failed to hide the fact that the deadlock between imperialism and the national movement still remains unresolved. On the contrary the Ramgarh Session of the Congress, though still leaving the main issues hanging in the air, has done nothing to make things easier for those (by no means only confined to the Viceroy's side) who hoped for a compromise.

To understand the real nature of the political crisis in India it is necessary to consider three aspects of the present situation, all of which are, of course, fundamentally inter-connected ; firstly, the international significance of the weakening of British Imperialism's hold over its main strategic and economic stronghold ; secondly, the historic stage of development of the national struggle ; and thirdly, the growing tensions within the national movement itself which reflect the growth of new forces and the re-alignment of classes.

The significance for the whole world of the Indian challenge to British imperialism is tremendous. Within the first few months of the war, British Imperialism, the leading world imperialist power, is being seriously attacked in its most vital spot. Before the war has fully developed, before the masses in the belligerent countries are fully awake to the extent of suffering they will have to endure, the Indian people, and in particular the Indian working class, have thrown down a clear challenge and are mobilising their forces for struggle. The effect of this challenge upon the subject people in other parts of the Empire has been far-reaching.

The strategic and economic importance of India to British Imperialism is such that the present Indian crisis is having a profound effect upon the whole war effort of the British and French imperialists. British military writers recognise India as Britain's strategic base in the Far East, as well as providing almost unlimited man-power. This was so in the last war. It will be even more so in this war, as was emphasised in advance by the Chatfield Report on the reorganisation of the Army in India. A strong, and more or less self-supporting, force is required in the East not only for preserving internal order and for the protection of such strategic outposts as Aden and Singapore ;

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but also as a striking force against the Soviet Union. In the last war troops from India were used for the invasion of Iraq (Mesopotamia) and Iran (Persia). Since it is clearly part of the British strategic plan to spread the war against the Soviet Union through those two countries, it is clear that India has to be considered as a "jumping-off ground" of the greatest importance in the event of the Allied war plans against the Soviet Union coming to maturity.

Not only strategically, but also economically, India is the pivot of the Empire. Some two-and-a-half times as much British capital is invested in India, according to Sir Robert Kindersley, as in all the rest of the colonial Empire put together. The exploitation of India, with its wealth of natural resources, has been developed to a far higher degree than elsewhere in the Empire and in the depth of the world economic crisis India was a valuable source of strength to British capitalism. In the period of four or five years some £250 million in gold was drained out of India, representing the savings of the middle peasantry who were unable to pay their taxes and meet their other commitments by the sale of their produce at world prices.

Strategically and economically, therefore, India is the keystone of the British Empire, the basis of a ruling class whose foreign-political aim is to develop the war against the Soviet Union and whose economic power rests on its super-profits reaped from the exploitation of the colonial peoples.

That it is at this very point that the edifice shows signs of cracking and that the people are already in active revolt against the war, is of tremendous significance for the forces of world socialism in their struggle against monopoly capitalism and in defence of the Soviet Union.

In the last world war, India was made to carry enormous burdens and imperialism revealed its naked aggressiveness. But the movements for liberation were in an early and undeveloped stage. The Indian National Congress was still a small bourgeois party petitioning the Viceroy for more adequate representation for Indians in the services and for preferential tariffs for Indian industry ; from 1906 its most militant section turned to acts of individual terrorism ; the working class was unorganised and in general unacquainted with the strike weapon ; the peasantry, though driven by starvation to sporadic outbreaks of revolt, was unorganised and politically unconscious.

The politically conscious middle class believed the promises and the slogans presented to them by the imperialists, and they faithfully followed the lead of those whom imperialism had bought over with minor concessions of a constitutional or commercial nature. It was only at the end of the war that discontent began to find open expression. Infected by the world revolutionary movement, the first wave of big strikes, the first real attack upon the foundations of British imperialism in India, took place in the years 1918-1921. In those years, in the course of bitter struggle and military terror, the nationalist movement

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was born and the ground prepared for its development to the powerful striking force that it is to-day.

The record of imperialism during the post-war period is a record of intensified aggression against every section of the Indian people. Its urgent necessity to preserve its exclusive control over the colonial markets without interference either from rival imperialists or from the rising colonial bourgeoisie, is reflected in the Ottawa Agreements, Tariff and Currency policies and so on. As the contradictions of capitalism develop this aggressiveness of imperialist rule sharpens and is seen in an increasingly uncompromising attitude towards the Indian bourgeoisie, a deepening of the already advanced agrarian crisis and a savage attack upon working-class conditions and organisations.

The 1935 Constitution sums up, with a clarity that constitutional verbosity is unable to obscure, both the difficulties and the aims of British Imperialism in India. Whilst giving some minor and unreal concessions in the provincial sphere, it securely planted real political power in the hands of the Viceroy and meticulously hedged it in with innumerable safeguards. At the same time it revealed the vital necessity of completely removing economic, financial and military power from the sphere in which " responsible " ministers were to operate ; and it perfected, with apt imperialist cunning, a plan for the constitutional enslavement of the people of India to the reactionary princes in alliance with vested interests and communalists. The alliance with reaction was consolidated ; the new democratic forces were to be effectually stifled.

Thus, with the outbreak of war an already critical situation was brought to a head. It was inevitable that the negotiations conducted with the Viceroy, after the outbreak of the war, should fail to find a suitable way out for those who hoped for a compromise and, with pathetic innocence, regarded India's challenging opposition to the war simply as a bargaining counter in a verbal debate with imperialism. The whole history of the last twenty-five years has shown a progressively narrowing basis for compromise. The Viceroy saw no alternative but to give an " insolent " and uncompromising reply to the Indian demand; and the growing pressure of the masses from below made it impossible for the Congress leaders to suggest a compromise that would be acceptable.

To-day, with the outbreak of the second imperialist war, the demand, first formulated in 1930, is for clear-cut independence and an end to the British connection. From the outset of the war the conflict has been sharp and undisguised. The tendency to compromise, still strong in some quarters, is hampered by the whole history and experience of 25 years ; and the political experience of the masses during those years has strengthened them against their being again misled by deceptive slogans.

Accompanying the growing tension between imperialism and the

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Congress, tension within the national movement itself grows increasingly acute. The class struggle is maturing, and this maturity is sharply reflected in the course the Congress takes. The magnificent Bombay strike on October 2, the wave of strikes sweeping across India—Allahabad, Cawnpore, Calcutta, etc.—the decision of the Bombay T.U.C. to declare general strikes in support of the demand for a 40 per cent. war bonus, culminating in the present strike of 150,000 Bombay Textile workers, and the mass meetings demonstrations and resolutions taking place in every locality and industry (including railways)—all these events present overwhelming evidence that the Indian masses *are already on the path of struggle.* This activity sharpens the conflict between Left and Right within the Congress, and makes the mass pressure irresistible.

The growth of the strong left-wing movement in India dates from the big strike movement in 1928, the subsequent nation-wide struggle in 1930, and the disillusionment of the masses with Gandhi's betrayals in the following years. This disillusionment, strongly felt by the younger elements within the Congress who were turning towards socialism, resulted not in weakening the Congress but in broadening its basis amongst the masses. Under the first provincial elections (February, 1937) Congress was swept into office in eight provinces with big majorities on a programme of "Wreck the Constitution" and radical labour and peasant reforms.

In two and a half years Congress membership leapt from 600,000 to five million.

The left wing, including Nehru, opposed acceptance of office in the provinces, fearing that the growing mass movement would be abandoned in favour of orthodox parliamentary methods and that imperialism would succeed in enticing the Congress ministers into constitutional co-operation.

The achievements of the Congress Ministries were not very remarkable ; the bare fringe of the social problem was touched and the ministers tended to function bureaucratically. The ministries, restrained on the one hand by their financial impotence and by the power in the hands of the civil service were, on the other hand, more and more clearly anxious to conciliate vested interests who were opposed to radical land and labour reforms. Notably, in Behar the Congress Ministers sided with the landlords against the peasants, and in Bombay they introduced reactionary anti-working-class trades union legislation.

In this situation conflict between the organised workers and peasants and the Congress governments was inevitable and became increasingly frequent. Mass activities were carried on to bring pressure to bear upon the Congress Ministries ; criticism was not hidden and became more sharp ; big demonstrations were staged and independent class actions for the remedy of pressing grievances increased in frequency

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and militancy. The Congress Ministers, unwilling to comply with the demands, complained that they were being embarrassed, tried to restrain the masses and finally resorted to police orders to suppress these activities.

Whilst it was the working-class and peasant leaders, communists and socialists, who led the masses in these " embarrassing " activities, there was simultaneously developing within the Congress a strong movement of radical discontent amongst the petty bourgeoisie and unemployed youth who saw no hope of progress from " working the Constitution " under the supervision of the British Viceroy.

The crisis developing within the Congress as a result of this growing dissatisfaction and the increased mass activities came to a head with the re-election in 1939 of Subhas Bose as Congress President in opposition to the nominee of Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee. The left-wing voted solidly for Bose and were followed by the large mass of Congress delegates who, on this straightforward issue of " struggle " or " no struggle," unhesitatingly stood for a positive step forward.

Bose's re-election was immediately recognised by the imperialists and the Gandhists alike as a significant indication of the temper of the country and the growing influence of the left wing in the national movement. The subsequent re-establishment of Gandhi's authority and the old leadership simply revealed the organisational weakness of the left and its inability to give a practical lead that was capable of steering the people clear of the personalities and the side issues which were utilised to obscure the major political issue. Bose himself lacked either the political qualities or the solid mass support to give this lead, and the way was left open for a disciplinary drive within the Congress. At this critical moment Nehru stood aloof and failed to give a lead ; by condemning the activities of the Left he gave the appearance of lining up with the Right wing and facilitating their attempts to take disciplinary action against the Left elements.

The key to the present rising tide of national struggle is to be found in the new vigour of the Trade Union movement and its proven ability to initiate a mass struggle. The movement achieved unity in 1938 and, though its membership still is only reckoned to be 380,000, the last few years have witnessed tremendous activities which have drawn into action thousands of unorganised workers. 1938 saw the highest number yet of workers involved in strikes (over 650,000) ; but already in the first six months of the war it is reckoned that over 400,000 have been involved, mainly in the big industrial centres of Bombay, Calcutta, Cawnpore, Allahabad and Ahmedabad. And this is in spite of increased repression, the wholesale arrest of leaders and the use of the Defence of India Act to extern trade union organisers and to prohibit meetings and the distribution of leaflets. Of particular importance is the unparalleled spread of the strike movement to small, out-of-the-way

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and unorganised industries. The close association of the workers in these isolated factories with the peasantry is an important factor in the development of peasant organisations and their growing political consciousness.

Since the war we have the news of the magnificent strike of 90,000 workers in Bombay against the war (about which the nationalist press remained absolutely silent), the successful strike of 30,000 in Cawnpore, successful strike of 36,000 in Calcutta, strike in Ahmedabad for war bonus, strike in Digboi oilfields, the successful strike of 15,000 Calcutta scavengers, and the present stoppage of 150,000 in Bombay on the demand for 25 per cent. war bonus. On Independence Day more than 50 factories stopped work for the day.

The peasant movement, only organised on an all-India basis for three or four years, is one of the most significant developments of recent years and one which, because of its ideology and its class-consciousness, must necessarily give an entirely new complexion to any national struggle in the future. It has a membership of nearly one million and is particularly strong in Behar, United Provinces and Madras.

Amongst the peasantry there is a very keen interest in the achievement of the Soviet Union in freeing the peasants from their age-old bondage to the landlords, and in recent years the amount of socialist literature circulating in the vernacular languages has increased enormously.

Thus, whilst the Congress is still calling for discipline and restraint, a movement is developing from below on a popular basis which is drawing into action workers, peasants, students and large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie. It is clear that such a movement has the organisational task of uniting all the active anti-imperialist forces, basing itself upon the feeling of the masses and being prepared to sweep forward the Congress into action on a national scale. It will be necessary to overcome sectional differences on the Left and give an increasingly clearly defined political leadership that will represent the rising movement of workers and peasants without whom no national movement is possible. The other left groups are disintegrating ; only the communists have a record of persistent day-to-day work in the different sectors of the national movement, and they have a responsible rôle to play in continuing to give this political lead, to give it clearly as the most active and advanced section of the anti-imperialist front, and to strengthen support in the working class and peasant organisations.

In the present situation it is clear that the vast majority of the politically conscious people are prepared for struggle ; and that the brunt of the struggle must fall on just those sections of the people over whom the influence of the communists has extended most during the last three years—the workers, the peasants and the radical bourge-

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oisie. This fact completely alters the complexion of any future struggle.

It is against this background of rising mass struggle that the moves of imperialism and of the upper national leadership acquire significance. It is clear that the basis for negotiations between the Congress and the Viceroy has necessarily been narrowed down by the growing acuteness of imperialist contradictions ; the contradictions within the Congress are also extremely sharp. The prospect of a mass struggle fills Mr. Gandhi with feelings of horror and foreboding. He writes in his paper *Harijan* : " It has been suggested to me that as soon as I declare civil disobedience, I shall find a staggering response. The whole labour world and kisans (peasants) in many parts of India will declare a simultaneous strike. If that happened I should be most embarrassed and all my plans would be upset. I must confess that I have no plan in front of me. Let me say that God will send the plan." He says : " I have not lost faith in Britain. I like the pronouncement of the Viceroy. I believe in his sincerity." Or again " . . . . If I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction . . . . nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting in anarchy and red ruin."

Gandhi still wields great influence over the Indian people. He also speaks for that very powerful, though numerically small, section of the national movement whose interests, while still basically opposed to imperialism, are also fundamentally threatened by the prospect of a mass struggle which cannot but differ radically from the previous civil disobedience movements. These people are feverishly trying to persuade themselves that a " compromise with honour " is still possible. They pretend to bang the door on negotiations with each succeeding declaration of their determined opposition to imperialism ; the wordy challenge is thrown down again and again in the hope that the Viceroy will scuttle his ship. But always the door miraculously remains open for further negotiation.

The Viceroy, by no means innocent at this game, hopes to use this section of the Congress as a means of disrupting and smashing the national unity ; they themselves hope to use the mass discontent as a means of screwing some small concessions out of the Viceroy.

The All-India Congress Committee meeting at Wardha reflected the increased tension between the protagonists. On the one hand bitter resentment at the Viceroy's apparent " insolence " and refusal to play ball ; on the other, barely concealed panic at the thought of having to apply mass sanctions against imperialism. Plenty of strong statements were made, but the inevitable door was left ajar. Nehru himself hesitatingly professed to believe that it was yet possible for imperialism, by a noble gesture, to transfer power to India and thereby to convert the imperialist war into a " just " war.

In this tense atmosphere and against the background of the Bombay Textile strike, the Congress annual session took place at Ramgarh on March 19. The arrest of hundreds of communists all over India,

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including Comrades Dange, Ghate, Mirajkar, Lahiri and Ranadive, of the popular socialists Jai Prakash Narain and S. Zaheer, of the T.U.C. officials such as R. S. Nimbkar and Parulekar, both well known in this country, as well as hundreds of active Congressmen and students, hung like a shadow over the meeting and impressed the delegates with the critical situation before them.

Jawarharlal Nehru moved the main resolution of the meeting, declaring again India's firm determination not to lend any support to the imperialist war, demanding complete independence and the right to call a Constituent Assembly in order to frame her own constitution. The resolution was passed almost unanimously, but only after several speakers from the Left had disowned the present policy of inaction and had declared that the people were united behind the Congress demands, but wanted those demands to be supported by immediate action.

Thus, whilst the outward appearance of the Congress after Tripuri is one of unimpaired and absolute determination to oppose the imperialist war and to lead the struggle for independence, it is clear that discontent inside the party with the present leadership is strong and that the unity desired is unity for struggle. The exclusion of Bose from participation in the proceedings weakened the Left and once more raised irrelevant personal issues.

The Times joyfully leaps to the conclusion that Ramgarh represents a crushing victory for Gandhi and the moderates over the "extremists," the communists and socialists. Gandhi, it is true, retains control as a virtual dictator, and he demands implicit obedience to his generalship and his interpretation of Congress policy. The Right wing retains undisputed leadership and, despite all their brave words, have not yet taken the positive step forward to active struggle which is demanded by the majority of Congressmen.

The vital decision for the Indian people is left hanging in the air ; and, so far as official resolution is concerned, it rests with Gandhi to decide how, when and if struggle will be launched—whether it shall be active non-violence or non-violent inaction.

But even *The Times* has soberly to admit that as yet no solution is in sight and will not be so long as the Congress will not "see reason." in other words, the Right wing retains power, but, in spite of obvious tendencies to throttle down the mass movement, only at the cost of a declaration which leaves no obvious opening for a compromise. The task which the Communists imposed upon themselves at Iripuri one year ago to make the unity of Congress not an abstract unity but unity for struggle—was the guiding principle of all advanced sections of the Congress at Ramgarh. They believe that it is possible, on the basis of Congress resolutions, to lead the people forward into a decisive struggle with imperialism, and that the time has now come, despite the fears and hesitations of Mr. Gandhi, to give a practical expression

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to the many verbal declarations made by the leaders.

Underlying all the proceedings at Ramgarh, and apparent in the main speeches, was a serious sense of responsibility coupled with deep bitterness at the hundreds of arrests of militant Congressmen taking place daily. Tension was near to breaking point ; in front of the delegates even Mr. Gandhi dared not speak of compromise. The determination of the people acts with relentless pressure upon the vacillating leadership.

How does the Labour Party leadership in this country react to the critical situation in India ? They have, along with the rest of the propagandists in the imperialist Press, consistently ignored the growing revolutionary ferment in India, the great strikes and the nation-wide opposition to war. They have not uttered a word of protest against the arrest of prominent officials in the Indian T.U.C. or the imprisonment of Congressmen. They have lined themselves up behind the Viceroy in refusing the demand of the Indian people for independence, and in offering an undefined and shadowy Dominion status, hedged in by safeguards, in the undefined and shadowy future.

They singly rebuke the Viceroy for his clumsy inability to dress the proposal for Dominion Status up in a disguise that will fool the Indian people and enable their leaders to find a basis for " compromise with honour." And in this they are consistent, not only with their past record of governing the Empire on behalf of the ruling class, but also with their present support of the imperialist war. Quite frankly Mr. Wedgwood Benn declared in the House of Commons on October 26 in the debate on India that " the over-riding consideration in the mind of every honourable member is how they can contribute to the successful issue of the war." India has to be drawn, whether by minor concessions or by force, into full support of the imperialist war with all her resources. That is the " over-riding consideration " for the Labour Party leaders.

But for the Indian people the " over-riding consideration " is their independence. Between these two viewpoints there is an unbridgeable gulf. On the one side stand the imperialists, including the Labour Party leaders ; on the other side stand those who desire to free themselves, and all men, from the bondage of imperialist exploitation and who are already moving along the path of open struggle.

The objection of the Labour Party leaders to draw the Indian people into the war must be seen in relation to the alignment of forces within India itself. Purely verbal support is given to the Congress at the same time as complete support is given to the measures of imperialist repression. Under no circumstances is there any share in this line of policy except *on the assumption that the Labour leaders believe that a compromise can be found which will satisfy both the Viceroy and the Congress Right wing.*

Their whole attention is riveted on just that section of the Congress which wants to protract negotiations. They desire to use Nehru to

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bridge the gulf between the people of India and the Congress Right wing in precisely the same way as they are being used by imperialism to bridge the gulf between itself and the Congress.

But the crisis in India is not a crisis of polite political differences between leaders ; it is not a crisis that can be solved in Viceregal reception rooms. It is the deep and fundamental crisis of imperialism which war has brought to a head in a period when the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces in India have acquired a new and unconquerable consciousness of their own strength. It is too late now to bandy about the phrases and constitutional futilities of 1919 and 1935. The cancer of British Imperialism in India has to be drastically cut away. The people, not individuals, are gathering their strength for the operation.

For the world and for the future of civilisation what is happening in India is of vital importance and full of hope.

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British Students on the Move

BY GEORGE MATTHEWS

(VICE-PRESIDENT, NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS; VICE-PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY LABOUR FEDERATION).

STUDENTS IN CHINA and Spain have been, and are to-day, strong allies of the working class in its struggle against reaction. Students in Germany, before 1933, became the dupes of Fascism, and until they experienced its effects were its allies against the working class.

In the years before 1929 it seemed possible that British students might take the path of the students of Germany. To-day we can say that, on the contrary, all the indications are that they are taking the path of students of Spain and China. The history of this change holds lessons, not only for the student movement, but for the working-class movement as a whole.

In 1926 students scabbed in the General Strike. In those days they were in the mass either apathetic or reactionary. They had not begun to question a social order which in the "boom" years before 1929 seemed to offer a measure of security and prosperity to the middle and upper classes from whom the students were largely drawn. They were not yet conscious of the enormous isolation from the life of the people which characterises the British Universities, and which is maintained by the class composition of the Universities, by the subjects taught, and by the methods of teaching. Their representative organisation, the National Union of Students, confined its activities to the organisation of student travel, and to the discussion of technical problems considered without relation to the problems of the society in which the Universities exist.

Within a few years came the first beginnings of a startling change. In the Pressed Steel Strike at Oxford, students helped the strikers, not the bosses. London students came out in support of the strikers in the Smithfield Meat Strike. The unemployed who marched from Wales and the North in the early years of the National Government were greeted by the students in every University town they entered. Nor was the sympathy of students extended only to the workers of Britain. The refugee problem, the struggle of the Chinese and Spanish people, evoked the practical sympathy of students in the form of great collections in the Universities. In 1938 in one term alone £5,000 was collected for the women and children of Spain. Delegations were sent from student organisations to China and Spain: and in the Spanish

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War many British students followed in the footsteps of John Cornford, and died fighting in the Spanish Republican Army. The small anti-war demonstrations of the early thirties developed into great campaigns for the policy of collective security and the building of the Peace Front, in order that peace should be maintained.

It is not necessary to look far for the reasons for the change. However isolated from the life of the people they were the Universities could not remain immune from the effects of the slump. However much they might be drawn from the wealthier classes students could not help seeing the effects of capitalist crisis on the lives of the people around them. However uninterested in politics they might have been in the days of the stabilisation of capitalism, the rise of Fascism in Germany and the growing menace of war brought more and more students into political discussion and activity. However small their knowledge of Socialism, the growing prosperity and the consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union, and the vivid contrast it offered to the rest of the world, produced an increasing interest in Marxism in the Universities.

This was a situation which placed a heavy responsibility upon the Socialist students in the Universities. For without the clear lead and guidance which only they could give this growing movement amongst the students could easily have been diverted towards Fascism. The unity between Socialist and Communist students which was achieved in 1936 enabled them to fulfil their responsibilities towards the students. Within a year of the achievement of unity the membership of the united organisation, the University Labour Federation, had doubled, and since then its membership, influence and prestige have steadily increased.

The new spirit which existed amongst students was expressed in the work of the National Union of Students. In 1937, for the first time, its Annual Congress dealt with a problem of great and immediate concern to students—the problem of Graduate Unemployment. In 1938 its Congress considered the relation of the Universities to Society, and put forward a plan of University reforms designed to enable the Universities to serve the needs of the people more effectively. In 1939 its Congress came to the conclusion that the maintenance and extension of democracy was the main task confronting the Universities and their students, and planned all the activities of the students for the coming year with that end in view.

For the first time, also, there was close collaboration with the youth. Hundreds of politically conscious students participated in the National Youth Campaign, and the great Youth Pilgrimage which it organised last year. The National Union of Students prepared a Bill for the radical reform of the whole educational system, which was passed at the National Parliament of Youth. There was close contact between all the student organisations and the British Youth Peace Assembly.

Thus, in the months immediately preceding the present war, it

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was possible to talk of a real British Student Movement, organised for the defence of culture, for the preservation and extension of democracy, and for the maintenance of peace, and having the support of the vast majority of the students of the country.

Seven months of war, so far from seeing the destruction of this movement, as was prophesied in some quarters noted for wishful thinking, have seen it strengthened enormously, and carried to a higher level.

The war brought immediate and large-scale attacks on University education. The Treasury Grant to the Universities, one of the main sources of their income, was granted only for six months, and was threatened with reduction. The number of students was drastically reduced by their conscription into the armed forces, which if it continues will leave the Universities with only a fraction of their normal small population. Thousands of students have been hit by the increase in cost of living and hundreds have been forced to abandon their studies.

The effects of the war on the students themselves have brought home to thousands of them a realisation of its true character. In the progressive wars of the people of China and Spain education has been extended and brought to the mass of the people. In this imperialist war free discussion and the search after truth are too dangerous to the ruling class to be permitted. Consequently the Universities have been directly and violently attacked.

These attacks, and the upheaval in the personal lives of students, have produced not merely an immediate reaction which has led them to undertake a great campaign for the defence of the Universities, but also a real heartsearching, a real desire to understand the fundamental causes of their problems and the problems of the world, and a new willingness to play a part in the solution of those problems. The war faced thousands of students with a necessity they had never felt before ; the necessity of making a political decision.

In the first months of the war students stood at the crossroads. Would they come in on the side of the working class ? Or would they become the allies of the ruling class ? This was the issue, and around it a great battle was fought in the Universities.

The Government made extraordinary efforts to draw the students into support of its war. Recognising the distrust of the Government and the war which was so widespread amongst students, they sent their ablest propagandists round the Universities. Meetings of the kind addressed by Lord Halifax himself at Oxford were organised in many Universities last term. Halifax's speech, in which he described this as war of youth against youth, was sent in an envelope marked " On His Majesty's Service " to every University student in the country. And other outside forces also made attempts to disunite and attack the progressive sections of the students—attempts which have culminated in the disaffiliation of the University Labour Federation from the

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Labour Party by the Government's Labour allies.

At the same time some of the leaders of some of the student organisations, who in the past had adopted a progressive policy, went over lock, stock and barrel to the side of reaction, and attempted to draw the rank-and-file of their organisations with them.

And when the propaganda of the Government, from without and from within, did not succeed in influencing the students, direct attacks were made in many places on freedom of speech and assembly in the Universities, there were a number of cases of victimisation, and the reactionary student minorities embarked upon a policy of hooliganism and the breaking-up of meetings.

The attempts of the Government failed completely, and for two reasons. First because they were exposed and explained by the Socialist and Communist students, who at the Christmas conference of the University Labour Federation had adopted a clear-cut policy of opposition to the war, and were thus able to give a clear lead to the rest of the students. And secondly because no amount of propaganda could make students support a Government whose policy was having such a disastrous effect upon them and upon the Universities. The campaign for the defence of the Universities against the attacks of the Government was the most successful ever run by the National Union of Students, and forced substantial concessions from the Government, while study and discussion went on in the Universities in a way unparalleled in their history.

The efforts of the Government received a final blow at the British Student Congress held at Leeds from March 27 to April 2.

The strength of the British Student Movement is shown by the size and representative character of this Congress. Whereas during almost the whole of the last war only small groups of 10 or 15 students would have dared to come together to discuss the questions which this Congress discussed, after six months of this war it was possible to hold the largest representative student congress ever organised in this country.

Over 550 students from every University and from many Training Colleges attended. For the first time at a Congress of this character there were large delegations from Oxford, Cambridge, and the Scottish Universities. For the first time all the other Student Organisations collaborated with the National Union of Students in the preparation of the Congress. (These organisations are: The Student Christian Movement, the University Conservatives, the University Liberals, the University Labour Federation, the British Universities League of Nations Society, and International Student Service). For the first time there had been discussions and activities in the localities which had drawn large numbers of students into the preparations for the Congress.

The very holding of such a Congress in war-time was a great blow against the Government.

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Statistics collected at the Congress show that by far the larger number of students who attended it were not members of any political organisation. They had come there because of their new interest in politics and in University affairs, and they had come with open minds to discuss their problems and arrive at answers to the questions they were asking. The changes in the minds of the students present, the questioning of old, preconceived ideas, and the throwing overboard of long-established prejudices which took place during the eight days of the Congress is something that none of us who were present are likely to forget. As one student said towards the end of the Congress: "A tide has swept over the Congress; fixed ideas have become unfixed; we are all re-examining and revaluating our old opinions."

The mood of the members of Congress was made clear at the first session, which was opened by H. G. Wells. Wells' facile solutions to the problems of the world—the drafting of documents and the calling of conferences of middle class intellectuals, coupled with a good sound bombing of the German people—were attacked by almost every speaker who followed him, from the Right to the Left. His attacks on the Soviet Union and his support of the present war (cloaked by a mass of phrases criticising the Chamberlain Government, and everybody else but himself) were exposed before the whole Congress by the Socialist speakers. Years ago the students might have been deceived by the panaceas of Wells. At Leeds they showed that they realised the need for fundamental changes and for struggle in unity with the people to bring them about.

Wells was opening the first section of the Congress, which dealt with the widest range of political problems, and in which Commissions discussed War and the causes of war, Imperialism, Democracy, the New World Order, and so on. In spite of the controversial character of the problems under discussion a remarkable measure of agreement was arrived at—and agreement of an advanced and progressive character. It is only necessary to examine some of the resolutions* passed by the whole Congress to see the advance made since the days of the General Strike.

The Congress showed that students have not thrown overboard the internationalism which has always characterised the British Student Movement when it recorded its largest vote for a resolution which shows just how little effect the oratory of Lord Halifax has had in the Universities.

"This Congress," ran the resolution, "believing that there is no quarrel between the peoples of the world, and encouraged by experience of international collaboration in the youth and student movements, rejects emphatically the attitude put forward by Lord Halifax that this is a war of youth against youth, and pledges itself to work to develop

*It should be pointed out that none of the resolutions are binding on either the National Union of Students or any other organisation which collaborated in the preparations for the Congress.

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the spirit of internationalism and international good feeling between the peoples of the world."

This resolution was carried by 451 votes to 6, with 15 abstentions.

Almost the same degree of unity was reached on other immediate questions. The Congress demanded by 382 votes to 26 " that the right of the Indian people to immediate and complete independence be implemented at once " and pledged " its full support for their struggle for freedom."

By 414 votes to 14 Congress declared that it believed that " the way to achieve a real solution of present social problems lies in the establishment of a society based not on the motive of private profit, but on the distribution of services and goods on the basis of the welfare of the people as a whole."

By 334 votes to 41 the Congress declared " that the war should not be used for a limitation of democratic liberties such as that imposed by the Emergency Powers Act, and also condemns the French Government's attack on Civil Liberty, and its recent innovations in the political and industrial organisation of the French people."

This section of the Congress closed with the taking of a test of opinion on the question of the war. The result, a 2 to 1 majority against the war, surprised many people at the Congress, and indicates the deep and widespread opposition to the war which exists, and which is often greatly under-estimated. In the discussions in the War Commission it was clear that what was troubling most of the students present and holding them back from active opposition to it, was not its character, but the problem of how to end it. Only a clear and concrete explanation of the way to end the war, which the Socialist students were able to give, crystallised the opposition to it which many of the students felt, but had not until then expressed. In the actual voting, which was taken on two resolutions, 281 votes were cast for a resolution which stated that :

" The continuance of the present war is not in the interests of the people of any country, and it is the duty of the students to work together with all sections of the people to bring it as rapidly as possible to a close," while a pro-war resolution secured 150 votes. There were 48 abstentions.

After these discussions on general political problems, the Congress went on to discuss the problems of " The Universities and Students in the World To-day." In this section of the Congress even wider agreement, and often unanimity, was the rule. Perhaps the most striking feature of the discussions was the consciousness, expressed again and again, of the isolation of the Universities from the people. There was an extraordinary depth of feeling on this question, which was expressed in a number of resolutions.

" This Congress," said one of them, " fully conscious of the apathy of students in relation to society, which is largely due to the isolation

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of the Universities from the lives of the people, and deploring the lack of social consciousness among the students, urges all students and all student bodies to adopt every method within their power and to pursue all existing facilities to bring students into closer contact with other sections of society, to enter into fellowship with the rest of the youth of this country, whatever their sphere of life and nationality, and on the basis of a mutual exchange of knowledge and experience, to work together through every channel in preparation for that better order of society which this Congress has in mind."

"We must identify ourselves with the people," said another resolution, "learn from them and make our contribution in a spirit of equality.

And in the Commissions detailed plans for reforming the Universities, for carrying on the campaign for their defence, and for bringing the students into closer contact with the people, were thrashed out and adopted by the Congress as a whole.

The last task of the Congress was the adoption of a Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities ; which, after outlining the responsibilities of students and their determination to fulfil them, demands certain rights—the right of free speech, free organisation, and free assembly, and the right to participate in the government and administration of the Universities. There was enormous enthusiasm for this Charter, symptomatic of a real determination to resist the attacks on student liberties which have been taking place, and which will undoubtedly increase in number and intensity. In the light of these attacks of the Government, the adoption of this Charter is of very great importance, and is likely to provide the basis for much of the work of the National Union of Students during the coming months.

This Congress has an importance in the international struggle for peace and social justice. It will be a source of encouragement to the students of India, struggling against the war and for independence and freedom ; to the students of America, where every national student organisation has demanded that America keep out of the war ; to the students of the Balkans, where 4,000 students of the University of Belgrade condemned the war and called on the students of the world to work against it ; to the students of Czechoslovakia, who demonstrated recently with the working class of Prague not only against Hitler, but against all imperialism.

A Liberal observer at the Congress described in the *Manchester Guardian* "a sense of intense responsibility which has emerged in the most striking way." But it was not only a sense of responsibility which emerged from the Congress. The Congress also demonstrated that students are beginning to see the only way in which they can fulfil their responsibilities The Congress demonstrated the deep dissatisfaction with present-day society which students feel. It demonstrated their determination to defend their rights and liberties. It demonstrated their profound belief in the principles of Internationalism.

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It demonstrated their understanding that only by struggle with the people can a better world be built. It showed further the depth of the feeling against the war which exists—a feeling which will find its expression during the coming weeks through the United Youth Campaign against the war which has just been launched.

In a word, the Congress showed that increasing numbers of the students of Britain are coming over to the side of the working class in its struggle against the war and for Socialism. It marked a new stage in the development of the student movement in Britain, and showed that the possibility exists of bringing *all* the students of Britain into an active, conscious movement which will be a strong ally of the working class and not its enemy.

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Fifty Years of May Day

BY DONA TORR

" GOADED BY THE attacks of the Socialists and New Trade Unionists " (records Old Man Howell), the London Trades Council, in 1890, participated in " May Day celebrations in favour of the ' solidarity of labour,' Eight Hours, and other idealistic proposals."* Thus Messrs. George Howell, George Shipton,† and other aristocrats of the London Trades Council and the T.U.C., saluted the dawn, the first international May Day of the working class, fifty years ago. The " two tendencies " in the Labour movement, already apparent when the Second International (1889) decreed May Day as the day of working-class solidarity, took in England peculiar forms characteristic of powerful older traditions. Their symbolic expression on the first London May Day—a common festival with carefully drawn lines of demarcation between participating bodies (separate processions, platforms and resolutions)‡ —has persisted.

The challenge of the New Unionists and the first May Day in Hyde Park (May 4, 1890) was this : that the workers proclaimed themselves a separate class, not mere hangers-on of their " natural superiors " or of the great Liberal Party ; that barriers between skilled and unskilled could be broken down ; that mass trade union organisations could exist and act independently ; that, far from sharing the mistrust of " wild " continental Socialists felt by T.U.C. leaders, the masses welcomed international solidarity. This new attitude, obvious after the great dock strike, startled the " Classes," who had no sooner caught and tamed the once unmentionable " democracy " than they were faced with new problems. Chamberlain studied the State Socialism of Bismarck and Lassalle ; Asquith soon provided the " Newcastle Programme." *Punch*, whose cartoons had for some years been depicting haggard men preparing to wring the neck of the Goose that Lays the Golden Eggs, to Sow Tares from baskets labelled " Socialism," or to step into abysses labelled " Anarchy," produced a portrait of a grim, untidy woman entitled " The New Queen of the May," with a Cap of Liberty on her head, a fiery bomb in one hand and a lily in the other, a sash labelled " International," and garlands labelled

*George Howell, *Trade Unionism Old and New*, 1891, pp. 191-97.

†George Shipton, Secretary of the London Trades Council, had driven Engels off its organ, the *Labour Standard*, in 1881.

‡ The Trades Council procession assembled on the river side of the Embankment roadway, the Central Committee on the north side ; they proceeded by separate routes to the Park where each had seven platforms.

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" Eight Hours," " Strikes," " Agitation," " Solidarity," " Dynamite." But, to show the different English spirit, there were also " sympathetic " verses :

> We are not the crushed down crowd, chummy, we were but yesterday,
> We are full of the promise o' May, brother, mad with the promise of May.

The Central Committee for the Eight Hours Legal Working Day Demonstration, created by Eleanor Marx and her husband, Edward Aveling, was responsible for the demonstration and became the parent of the historic London May Day Committee. The participation of the London Trades Council was due to Tom Mann (resolutions of April 10, 1890), at that time a delegate from Battersea A.S.E. In the months following the dock strike (August-September, 1889) he had struggled, together with a group of New Unionists, to enliven the Council and transform it into a " Labour Parliament " for London :

> The germ of an organisation capable, by a full exercise of its industrial, educational and political powers, of completely freeing Labour and making the worker master of his fate.*

He and his friends had increased the affiliated membership from (roughly) 18,000 to 45,000, and were conducting a stout fight against Mr. Shipton. But they had no chance in that citadel of the crafts of carrying a resolution which would mean the destruction of craft privileges (an eight-hour day fixed by law, " the offspring and spawn of feeble minds . . . . transplanted from the Continent of Europe," was Howell's phrase, quoted from " the late John Bright.") Mann, himself since 1886 the first and best agitator for the legal eight-hours day in its full Socialist sense, compromised with a motion omitting the word " legal " ; Mr. Shipton, whose later efforts at sabotage were circumvented by Aveling, was condemned to celebrate May Day. Tom Mann, himself a distinguished member of the most aristocratic Old Union, the Engineers, had at least gained the participation of " official " Labour, and half a million people were seen in Hyde Park.

For the first time in history, the dockers, despised outcasts less than a year before, were publicly acknowledged in the ranks of organised Labour. In the Trades Council procession they marched " in their rough working clothes " beside the ancient aristocracy, next to the kid-gloved, top-hatted compositors, the " gentlemen comps."† Tom Mann, their President, marched beside them with Tillett. His own platform was widely surrounded, but the greatest crowds thronged the platforms of the Central Committee, where the Gasworkers, with whom Eleanor Marx was so closely associated, had assembled. Here, speakers included, besides herself and Aveling: John Burns, Will Thorne, John Ward, Cunninghame Graham, Bernard Shaw, Robert Dell, Michael Davitt, Stepniak, and Paul Lafargue. Hyndman and the S.D.F. had two platforms near the Trades Council and a resolution calling for Socialism ; Harry Quelch's separate union of

*_Labour Elector_, January 11, 1890.
†_Star_, May 5, 1890.

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dockers (South Side Labour Protection League) demonstrated only as individuals ; William Morris, the Socialist League and some small unions, had demonstrated with red flags on May 1.

" What would I give if Marx had lived to see this awakening," was Engels' first thought on May 4 as he watched the scene from the roof of a van. " I held my head two inches higher when I climbed down from the old goods van." He wrote for the Vienna *Workers' Paper* his famous account of the day. " The grandest and most important part of the whole May Day festival " in Europe was the fact that the English proletariat had " again entered the movement of its class . . . . the grandchildren of the old Chartists are entering the line of battle."

Mr. Shipton also did some writing ; the June *Murray's Magazine*, a bourgeois journal, contained his attack on the New Unionism, immediately replied to in one of the great documents of our working-class history, the pamphlet written by Mann and issued in his name and Tillett's, declaring, as in his first pamphlet of 1886, that trade unionism must become the instrument of socialism.*

The conflict between Old and New Trade Unionism (leaving aside features peculiar to the time) was in essence the conflict between the privileged minority, bound to capitalism by offices and " superior " conditions, and the representatives of the great majority for whom only Socialism can bring emancipation ; the conflict between craft interests and class interests, between trade union politics and the politics of revolutionary Socialists. Many problems unsolved then are not solved to-day, e.g., overtime versus unemployment ; thanks to the divisions between skilled and unskilled workers, it was 18 years before even the miners won a legal eight hour-day ; we have not yet conquered craft unionism, nor was the first promise of the new unions permanently fulfilled. But the gains of the gasworkers and the dockers' strike, symbolised on May 4, 1890, were no illusion. New masses were entering history, the old unions were being transformed, the basis for a Labour movement, of a Party of the working class, had arrived, the first steps had been taken in the advance from bourgeois democratic to Socialist demands, from Liberal politics to class politics. The lesson of history is simply that no gains are secure while capitalism lasts—the fight goes on.

For two years after the first May Day, the legal Eight Hours won the vote on the Trades Council, and huge united demonstrations were held ; then separation began again. Until the Great War, May Day was kept alive, strong at times, but often sadly weak, by the Socialists (S.D.F., I.L.P., etc.), and some of the trade unions and trade union stalwarts. The militant tradition grew and especially in the mining districts became a mass tradition.

So far, however (but this is written in April), we have only had one

**The New Trades Unionism.* A reply to Mr. George Shipton. By Tom Mann and Ben Tillett. June, 1890.

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truly revolutionary May Day in Britain : in Glasgow on Wednesday, May 1, 1918, when, under the leadership of the Clyde Workers' Committee and W. Gallacher, Clydeside struck work, the C.W.S. released its employees for the day, and 100,000 marchers joined a demonstration ending at Duke Street Prison, with the shout of " Release John McLean ! " The greatest of our past May Days is associated with the revolutionary anti-war agitator whose name Lenin honoured beside that of Karl Liebknecht.

In every country, the history of May Day epitomises the growth of its revolutionary forces : the urge for class unity and therefore for international unity, the conflict within the movement itself between progressive forces of class struggle and reactionary forces of class collaboration. Everywhere May Day has been understood by the advanced guard as a day for assertion of power, a day of political challenge, of audacity and defiance. Everywhere the allies of the ruling class have been concerned to damp it down or divert it. Ramsay Macdonald, watching the Cup Tie Final at Wembley in 1925, after the " Zinoviev Letter " and before the General Strike, decided that these " sportsmanlike teams symbolised our great movement ; " On May Day we celebrate all it represents." In 1933, the German Social Democratic leaders, before their final extinction, advised the workers to celebrate Hitler's compulsory May Day under the Swastika ; they had already (1929) allowed May Day to be prohibited by the Socialist police chief, Noske, and workers to be fired upon and killed for celebrating it.

For the sake of the May Day challenge, thousands of men and women throughout the world have been thrown into jail, ridden down, and shot down. In Russia the Bolsheviks gradually inspired and steeled the workers to add to the demand for a shorter working day, the dangerous political slogan : " down with autocracy." Liebknecht, in 1916, was imprisoned after making on May Day the first great German anti-war demonstration.

The fifty years of May Day have brought vast new revolutionary forces into the field. At China's first great revolutionary May Day, in Hankow 1927, Tom Mann addressed 200,000 people. In India, the red flags increase with the imprisonments and suppression. Everywhere the possibility of peaceful, legal celebrations is diminished. In the European countries where Social-Democratic leaders are no longer needed as agents of the ruling class, in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Italy, the only legal celebrations are under the Swastika. In France, the new death penalty. To-day the challenge of May Day is a challenge to the whole system of war-mongering, slaughter and Colonial oppression ; the task of the revolutionary is to end imperialist war and imperialist peace.

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DOCUMENTS OF THE MONTH

National Shop Stewards' Conference Resolutions

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY the National Shop Stewards and Workshop Representatives' Conference held in Birmingham, April 6-7, 1940, and published in *The New Propellor*.

RESOLUTION

THIS CONFERENCE OF Shop Stewards and Workshop Representatives elected to represent a total of 217,492 workers employed in 107 works in Aircraft, Ship Building, Ship Repair, Motors, Radio, Electrical Equipment, Arms Manufacture, and other sections of the Key Industry to-day, the engineering and allied trades, affirms its determination to extend and build that solidarity which is essential in the fight to defend and improve our wage rates and working conditions built up through long years of Trade Union effort and the sacrifice of millions of Trade Unionists in the struggle against the employers.

The Unity of all sections of the engineering and allied trades, irrespective of the Trade Unions to which they belong, is more than ever necessary to-day.

The Engineering employers, both Federated and non-Federated, taking full advantage of the war, and the National Government propaganda for sacrifice, are intensifying their normal peace-time attacks upon our conditions and standards.

Established customs and practices, through the plans of the Government and employers, stand in danger of being swept away. These conditions can only be maintained by vigilant Shop organisation.

The purchasing power of our wages lessens as the cost of living rises. The Keynes Plan of " Deferred Payments " or Compulsory Savings (which we condemn as wage cuts) further threaten our earnings. The Keynes Plan " Family Allowance " proposals strikes at the roots of Trade Unionism and the Trade Union method of establishing wage rates on work performed, and puts our earnings on to a " Means Test." We deprecate the voluntary savings scheme in the factory as detrimental to future wage demands.

Dilution Plans of the Government on a scale never before known, are being discussed in secret. It is obvious from what has been published that large numbers of women and youths are to be forced into the industry at low rates of pay. The wage rates and working conditions of the organised factories are presented with the dangers of rates being undercut by the putting out of work to unorganised sub-contract factories.

Trade Unionists everywhere should do all in their power to organise our fellow workers in these factories, to assist and bring within the orbit of organisation, our womenfolk and youths in the factories. The utmost vigilance should also be exercised in the operation of all such schemes, in order to safeguard the status of all workers in the industry, so as to avoid, as far as possible, a repetition of what took place after the last war.

These problems brought to the forefront by the present war, make essential a united stand by all engineering workers. The experience of the French workers has shown how rapidly the gains of previous struggles and elementary rights of organisation have been destroyed by the wartime offensive of the French Government and employers.

The Chamberlain Government and the employers of this country can be equally as ruthless as the French Government and employers. Its recent armed attack upon Indian and Rhodesian strikers and its close friendship and collaboration with the French Government must be a warning to us.

Taking our stand on the basis of working class solidarity, in wartime no less than in peacetime, we proclaim our determination to resist all such attacks and to fight unreservedly for the interests of the working class in every field.

There is increasing evidence that the worker in the shops is continually fighting by strikes and other actions to defend Trade Union standards and Trade Union principles, to protect their Shop Stewards and active Trade Unionists against victimisation by employers who are greatly profiting by the war.

In most cases, these efforts of the Trade Unionists are not supported by the Executives, whose policy of support for this war, has caused them to abandon the defence and advancement of the members' interests. Their policy endangers the very existence of our Trade Unions. It is, therefore, the men, women and youths in the shops, who must take up the struggles

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to preserve our Trade Unions, to greatly strengthen their Trade Union organisation, to elect Shop Stewards in every department and section of the works, so that we may get our Trade Unions serving the purpose for which they have been built, for which we pay our contributions, and to which end—the defence and advancement of the members' interests—policy must be directed.

This Conference therefore resolves to do all in its power to :—

(1) Establish 100 per cent. Trade Unionism of male and female workers of all ages.
(2) Secure the election of Shop Stewards in every section in engineering works throughout the country.
(3) To fully maintain the individual rights of all members of the Trade Unions, to preserve and extend the democratic practices inside the Trade Unions.
(4) Campaign in the respective unions for an increase of £1 per week on our wages, preferably on the basic rate, and fight for wage increases and a shorter working week in the shops.
(5) Get a minimum rate of wages which shall be not less than 90 per cent. of the skilled male workers rates, for all adult male and female workers not engaged in skilled work. That all substitute labour, semi or unskilled, male or female, to be paid the rate for the job irrespective of ability on the principle of " Equal Pay for Equal Work."
(6) Resist every attempt to introduce compulsory savings under any guise.
(7) Establish, through our Trade Unions, a better control of overtime.
(8) Secure the observance of Trade Union Agreements where such are in the workers' interests.
(9) Gain adequate ventilation, lighting, heating, A.R.P. (including real bomb-proof shelters), canteens, tea-making facilities, adequate transport facilities and other improved working conditions.
(10) To co-ordinate the activity of all Shop Stewards through a national Shop Stewards' Movement.
(11) To fight for higher dependants' allowances and rates of pay for members of the armed forces.
(12) To press for the rigid control of the price of essential commodities
(13) For the rigid adherence to the Factory Acts.
(14) The existing procedure of the York Memorandum has proved itself to be detrimental to the interests of the members and we demand the settlement of grievances on the job.

These things will only be accomplished on the basis of how we build and strengthen our Trade Union organisation in the factories.

* * *

STATEMENT ON WOMEN

Thousands of women are in the engineering and allied trades, many doing skilled jobs, receiving inadequate rates of pay and practically wholly unorganised, used by the employers as cheap labour.

This war period now faces the industry with the entrance of 1,000,000 or more women, which the Government and employers hope to use to help undercut our wages and conditions.

Women are on nightshift and working excessive hours of overtime and the 1937 Factory Act covering women and young people is rapidly going by the board.

Women have not yet received equivalent wage increases as recently won by the males.

Therefore this conference resolves to take the necessary steps to defeat the objective of the employers and to draw into the organised working class movement all female labour in the industry by :—

(1) Shops Stewards to initiate immediately a campaign for extensive Trade Union recruitment into the existing unions catering for females.
(2) Campaign within A.E.U. for its ranks to be opened to females.
(3) To rapidly increase the number of women shop stewards and to draw them into the shops committees, establishing the utmost unity.
(4) To give the maximum assistance to obtain the outstanding demands for wage increases for females.
(5) Females substituted for males to receive the same rate for the job, and for all other jobs, the highest possible rate to be achieved in relationship to local circumstances, endeavouring to raise the status of women to the level of the men.
(6) Opposition to extension of nightshift working.
(7) Opposition to overtime working.
(8) Maximum assistance and education in Trade Unionism to be given to females to enable them to become a force in the workshops, side by side with the males.

* * *

YOUTH STATEMENT

Among both adults and young workers in the engineering trades there

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is a growing understanding of the importance of Trade Union organisation, of a recognition that the interests of youth and adults coincide, especially during the present war.

The employers will bring yet more youth into the industry as the war progresses, not only that more adult workers may be conscripted into the armed forces, but also in order to still further increase their record profits by the exploitation of badly paid youths.

As each Shop Stewards' Committee gives assistance to the organisation of the youth into the Trade Unions and helps the youth to form their own Youth Factory Committees, so will we add to the organised strength of the workers in the factory and the development of the workshop movement to gain better working conditions. We should also remember that the youth of to-day will be the future leaders of our movement.

Where employers refuse to recognise youth organisation, of the right of Shop Stewards to represent youths, the youth demands can be achieved mainly through action and solidarity in the shops with the full support of the Shop Stewards and all adult workers.

The willingness of the youths to fight for their rights was most clearly shown in the youth strikes in 1937, starting on the Clyde, spreading with lightning-like rapidity throughout the country, gaining in a few short weeks a measure of trade union recognition which 40 years of negotiations had failed to secure.

Shop Stewards and active trade unionists everywhere should therefore assist and encourage the youth to fight to gain :—

(1) Higher basic rates for youths and Apprentices.
(2) Youths and Apprentices under 18 to receive 50 per cent. of adult increases and those over 18 to receive full adult increases.
(3) That all youths shall get the adult rate on reaching the age of 20 years.
(4) Maintain the apprenticeship system where it exists and fight for adequate technical training in the employers time and variation of work where no apprenticeship system exists.
(5) Abolition of all overtime for those under 21.
(6) Abolition of all night work for those under 21.
(7) The gaining of 100 per cent. Trade Union organisation and setting up Factory Youth Committees.
(8) Rigid observance of Factory Acts.
(9) All youth in the industry exempt from service while dilution exists.
(10) Co-ordination of Factory Youth Committees in Area Youth Committees alongside Area Shop Steward Committees.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Serving My Time. Harry Pollitt. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 5s. 292 pp.

Deadlock War. Tom Wintringham. (Faber and Faber.) 8s. 6d. 279 pp.

On Two Fronts. Corder Catchpool. (Allen and Unwin.) 1s. 160 pp.

Hopousia. J. D. Unwin. (Allen and Unwin.) 21s. 475 pp.

Europe's Dance of Death. G. T. Garratt. (Allen and Unwin.) 10s. 6d. 332 pp.

Unemployment and the Rationing Complex. A. Grant McGregor. (Pitman.) 6d. 32 pp.

Karl Marx in his Earlier Writings. H. P. Adams. (Allen and Unwin.) 7s. 6d. 221 pp.

The Unemployment Assistance Board. John D. Millet. (Allen and Unwin.) 8s. 6d. 30 pp.

The Rape of the Masses. Serge Chakotin. (Labour Book Service.) 2s. 6d. (to members.) 299 pp.

Mr. Keynes Answered. Emile Burns. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 1s. 80 pp.

Spain Under Franco. A. V. Phillips. (United Editorial.) 3d. 28 pp.

Where Stands Democracy? Harold J. Laski and others. (Macmillan.) 3s. 6d. 152 pp.

News from France. (Anti-Fascist Relief Committee.) 1d. 4pp.

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BOOK REVIEW

Serving with the Colours

Serving My Time by Harry Pollitt. (Lawrence and Wishart. 5s.).

THIS BOOK TELLS of a soldier's service under the Red Flag, the colours of the working-class, from the rank of a private to the time when a few red stars shine in his collar, a decoration well deserved indeed. Here we have, told in a swift and modest way, the life story of what would be called a common working man; though, measured as workers should and must measure things, Harry Pollitt has proved himself to be anything but an ordinary man. His record shows that he started (like a million more of us) a far, far way behind scratch in the race of life (bar the fact—a big fact—that he had a fine, courageous, and indomitable mother). It has been a hard race for him; sometimes a hot one; but he has kept on, never allowing himself to feel tired, and to-day Harry is running fast (gathering many more to run the way with him) towards the goal of Communism. The book shows that for some time he was something of a lonely runner. He is a lonely runner no longer, and the credit that there are now many thousands running alongside of him and many more stripping for the race must in a large way go to him and a handful of comrades. The Trades' Union Flag is widening out into the Banner of the People, and Harry is one of the bearers.

He wasn't born in a castle, or even in a Big House. He was born in a little house, in a mean little street, lit by a solitary light at the top; at the bottom a canal, and on its banks a cotton-waste factory. Yet the stars shone down on this mean little street, though poverty hid them from the sight of the people, for, as Harry tells us, the characteristics there were poverty, sickness and death. The trinity of the workers; poverty, sickness and death; and death isn't always the roughest of their friends. Harry came of age when he was twelve years old (two years in front of me), and he tells us that " happier days were at hand," when he was to sit for an examination to show he was fit enough scholar to fill the noble position of a half-timer; and he got the exhilarating experience of a twelve year old kid rising at four-thirty in the morning, and going, head under his mother's shawl, to do his childish bit to increase the wealth of the community. A genial answer to the petition of " Give us this day our daily bread." Well, the new petition is—and Harry has helped it on—Give us this day our Daily Worker.

The author rushes his childhood swiftly away from him (which is a pity), eager to become the fledged worker, and the pioneer of a sturdier movement among the workers. Only a hundredth part of what Harry Pollitt has done can be recorded in this book; and yet an amazing amount of work done is pictured for us in this little book. Harry has well and truly laboured for his fellow workers; so different from those who left the workers' movement for a handful of silver, or a ribbon to stick in a coat.

I commend the many good things in this book; of the scenes in Harry Pollitt's own life; of his experiences with the life of others; of his fine defence of the Communist Party from the dock; of his finer description of Lenin's funeral; of his criticism of the bespatted and be-gloved Labour Leaders

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who are only anxious to lead themselves into a nice, well-paid, quiet job; and his great vision is not a dream: it is as certain as the rising up and going down of the sun.

All the workers ought to try to get it. It is worth having, if only for the truth that's told, not so much in Harry Pollitt's words, as in Harry Pollitt's life: all things age; only the workers stay forever young.

SEAN O'CASEY.

LABOUR MONTHLY REGIONAL CONFERENCES

MANDATED BY THE delegates at the London LABOUR MONTHLY Conference to go ahead with the work of organising similar conferences in the most important provincial centres, the Conferences Organising Committee now has considerable progress to report. The following arrangements have already been made:

		Speakers	*Conference Secretary*
Sheffield	April 28	R. Palme Dutt William Green	J. Brennan, 47 Victoria Street, Sheffield, 3.
Cardiff	May 18	Arthur Horner Harry Pollitt	C. V. Harris, 16 Llandetty Road, Fairwater, Cardiff.
Manchester	May 26	R. Palme Dutt George Crane	L. J. Banks, 6 Langley House, Carlton Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, 16.
Newcastle	June 1	R. Palme Dutt	S. MacDonald, 109 Addison Road, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
Leeds	June 2	Ivor Montagu	Arthur Taylor, 81 Elland Road, Brighouse, Yorks.
Birmingham	June 9	R. Palme Dutt	Joseph Solway, 86 Lyndon Road, Olton, Birmingham.

There is no need for us to emphasise the importance of the work of explanation and clarification which these Conferences can perform. We call upon all our readers and members of LABOUR MONTHLY Discussion Groups to do everything they can to interest those organisations with which they are in contact, and to help make these Conferences as great a success as the London one.

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